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**An Evaluation of the BBC News School Report Project in Initial
Teacher Education**

for the

Training and Development Agency (TDA)

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TDA

Contents

An Evaluation of the BBC News School Report Project in Initial Teacher Education	1
for the	1
Training and Development Agency (TDA)	1
Acknowledgements	2
1 Executive summary	4
2 Introduction	4
2.1 Context: teacher training in England	5
2.2 Context: project outline	5
2.3 Context: previous evaluations	6
3 Methodology	7
4 Findings: key themes from the evaluation data	8
4.1 Partnerships and models of Initial Teacher Education	9
4.2 Trainees' professional knowledge and understanding	12
4.3 Trainees' professional attributes and identity	14
4.4 Trainees' professional skills in respect of personalising learning	16
4.4 Freedom, risk, authenticity, creativity, innovation	17
4.5 Raising the profile of stakeholders	19
5 Enablers and barriers	21
6 Recommendations	23
7 References	24
8 Appendices	25
8.1 Sample	25
8.2 Survey Data	26
Introduction	26
Methodology	26
Findings and Analysis:	27
Section A: All Respondents	27
Section B - Providers:	30
Section B - Q2: To what extent was this reason realised?	30
Section D School Mentors:	47
Summary	49

1 Executive summary

Overall, the project greatly enhanced trainees' experiences of initial teacher education, in terms of collecting robust evidence for particular standards and enhancing employability. The project provided opportunities for accelerated professional development of trainees in terms of enhancing leadership and enabled trainees to be graded 1 in Ofsted criteria.

The evaluation indicated the following:

- Taking part in the project offers new models of partnership in terms of consortia and rhythms of placement.
- The project resulted in enhancement of trainees' subject knowledge and technical skills, providing evidence for standard Q14.
- The project exposed trainees to working in cross-curricular and extra-curricular contexts, providing evidence for standards Q17 and Q23.
- Trainees engagement in the project led to greater independence of learning (and concomitant personalisation) than in other forms of coursework due to their ownership of tasks. This provided evidence for standard Q31.
- The professional profile of trainees was enhanced, as was that of the school. The former led to increased perception of employability.
- Trainees were given more freedoms, encouraged to take risks and to engage with authentic tasks. This provided evidence for standards Q8, Q10 and Q30.
- The project led to richer reflections on practice than other teaching the trainees had undertaken.
- The project accelerated the trainees' confidence and professional development as evidenced for standard Q7 and led to different relationships between trainees and other school staff.

2 Introduction

This evaluation was carried out by members of the IT in Teacher Education (ITTE) national subject association for the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA), the government agency responsible for teacher training in England.

It reports on the impact of the engagement in the BBC News School Report project by initial teacher education (ITE) providers and their trainees (also known as assistant teachers) and partner schools. The project was introduced in November 2009 and ran until March 2010. The evaluation was conducted from April to July 2010.

2.1 Context: teacher training in England

The training of the teachers is undertaken in one of two modes, HEI based or employment-based. In the former trainees attend a course of training with a provider, typically a university or other higher education institution (HEI). This is complemented by school experience, in which trainees experience placements in two schools that are in partnership with the HEI. In employment-based training, assistant teachers are contracted as supernumerary staff in a school and undertake their training mainly in that school, with some offsite sessions at a provider (typically an HEI or local consortium). In both modes of training, assistant teachers must work in at least two schools (TDA, 2008). The pattern of deployment to schools and centre-based training varies from provider to provider. This pattern is also referred to as the 'rhythm' of the training.

To qualify as a school teacher, trainees must pass whatever course they have enrolled on with a provider (typically a postgraduate certificate of education PGCE or, in the case of some HEI provision, a degree), meet the requirements for training (TDA, 2008), which cover such matters as length of course and placements and provide evidence that they have met the standards for qualified teacher status (QTS) (TDA, 2008).

2.2 Context: project outline

BBC News School Report is an annual project which aims to engage 11–14 year olds with news by helping them to set their own editorial agenda for a real audience. Resources, including six lesson plans explaining the basics of journalism, are available on the BBC News School Report website¹. Schools taking part work towards a national deadline, for the news day on 11th March. On this day all the secondary schools involved became broadcasters and simultaneously publish video, audio or text-based news on their school websites. The BBC News School Report site links all the school sites together using an interactive map, and all BBC platforms – including Radio 4, BBC 1, News 24 and regional news and radio – feature samples of students' work from around the country, driving a real audience to all of the work featured on the BBC site.

The 2009-2010 academic year was the third year that the TDA has worked with the BBC on News School Report and has provided funding to ITT providers.

In the academic year 2009/2010, ITE providers were invited to apply to the TDA for funding to support their involvement in the project. Funding was to enable working across the partnership and to provide training by the BBC. This was necessary as the normal BBC project model was that a school would take part independently of other schools and HEIs. In doing so the BBC had a lead teacher named in the school. For the ITE provider, engagement in the project meant there was a more complex interaction between stakeholders. Providers themselves, and lead providers identified in each region, liaised both with the BBC and with the schools in which participant trainees were placed. The lead teacher contact for the BBC in a school was, in some cases, the trainee teacher.

2.3 Context: previous evaluations

For a number of years BBC News have commissioned an independent evaluation of the project (Passey 2008, 2009). These reported on the project's impact on schools, teachers and pupils. Key findings included:

- Schools were supported in their involvement in the project by City Learning Centres (CLCs) and also by BBC mentors.
- The news produced by the pupils in schools was wide ranging.
- Pupils are unlikely to have been able to encounter this sort of experience through other channels.
- Educational gains were reported by teachers involved with the project.
- The project was highly inclusive and empowering for pupils.

The TDA became involved in the project in 2007 from the perspective of its use in teacher training. The TDA commissioned an independent evaluation from the IT in Teacher Education association, of which the authors are committee members. The TDA were especially concerned to have an evaluation of the relationship between trainees' participation in the project and the achievement of professional standards needed for gaining qualified teacher status.

Themes emerging from the evaluation report in 2009 were its impact on partnership, the design of training, achievement of standards and the use of media and technology. Key findings included:

- The project has enhanced the professional attributes and skills of trainee teachers engaged in the project, providing many opportunities to evidence meeting the QTS Standards.
- The evidencing of Standards through the project required some changes to existing recording and monitoring systems.
- The project's outcomes against QTS Standards are more clearly defined than for CPD activity for qualified teachers.
- Trainees have shown high levels of confidence, and a willingness to take risks, in leading activities within the project including liaison across schools and with a wide range of teachers.
- The multi-disciplinary nature of the project provided opportunities for providers to look at innovations and change to their programme design and assessment.
- The project provided opportunities for trainees to work in non-standard environments, increasing their understanding of learning beyond the classroom and in work-related contexts.

- Where trainees are on employment-based routes or in a single placement for the duration of the project there has been greater opportunity for successful completion due to the fixed timelines in the project.
- The project had positive impact on trainees' learning in the fields of journalism, media, literacy and use of technology. Their confidence and maturity was enhanced.

(adapted from ITTE, 2009, pp3-4)

3 Methodology

Following on from the 2009 evaluation by ITTE, discussions with the funding body (TDA) and within the evaluation team led to the drawing up of a set of key questions to be investigated, which would be used to inform the data collection. These were:

- motivations for taking part; for providers, trainees and school mentors
- impact on trainees' learning
- impact on training and standards

The areas above formed the basis for the four research questions used in the evaluation.

1. From an ITE perspective, what were the reasons for taking part in this project?
2. How did the project fit in with the existing ITE programme?
3. From an ITE perspective, how did the project impact upon trainees' experience in school?
4. What were the enablers and barriers to the success of the project? (With particular reference to the trainee experience and Standards Q7, Q8, Q10, Q30, Q31 and Q32.)

In respect of the last question, the impact was to be examined with reference to particular standards for QTS. This was because, whereas in 2009 the evaluation had looked at all standards, there appeared to be strong evidence emerging for some standards in particular. These were Q7, Q8, Q10, Q30, Q31 and Q32. These questions formed the basis of the data collection; the methods are described below. The subsequent findings are drawn from the analysis of the data collected. These findings cut across the questions themselves and are presented thematically.

The 2010 evaluation was conducted through the use of an online survey, focus groups and telephone interviews with providers and school mentors.

Respondents included trainee teachers themselves, their tutors as representatives of teacher education providers and their mentors as representatives of the schools in which the trainees were placed. See the appendix for further details on the sample of respondents.

In April 2010 a survey was posted online and e-mail notification sent to all providers and those trainee teachers who had provided e-mail addresses. Providers were asked to forward the e-mail to schools and other organisations, such as CLCs, that were engaged in the project within a provider's teacher training partnership. The survey asked for responses using a Likert scale with opportunity for free text expansion at the end of each section. Questions were devised to elicit views around the key themes under evaluation, listed above.

Three focus group sessions were held – in the Midlands, North and South of England. Invitations were sent to all providers with, again, the request to send them onto other stakeholders in their partnerships. Representatives of providers and trainee teachers attended the event. Where it was not possible to attend in person, respondents were asked to submit a written report based around the research questions and key themes under investigation. The focus group discussions were recorded (using video with informed consent) to enable the researchers to validate the data and provide data triangulation.

The focus group sessions were designed to allow groups of respondents to discuss their views on each of the key themes in more depth. This would provide for triangulation against the survey data. Groups were formed so that they were homogeneous by type – all trainees, or all providers. The online survey was also made available for individuals at each event to complete. This enabled the researchers to ensure as many respondents as possible completed the survey. Whilst respondents were invited to do the online survey prior to the evaluation day and focus group event, it was acknowledged that time constraints and communication irregularities meant this was not always possible. By building in time to do the online survey on the evaluation day (over the lunch break) the researcher maximised the number of respondents.

Following the focus group sessions, and preliminary analysis of the online survey responses, telephone interviews were conducted with those who had not responded by either of these other means. This was particularly important to gain the views of school mentors who were underrepresented in the first round of data collection. This was because; school mentor's contact details were not always available for the online survey, and mentors could not be released from school to attend the evaluation day event.

4 Findings: key themes from the evaluation data

The evaluation was based on the data gathered in relation to the four research questions listed in the Methodology section. As discussed, the data yielded answers which cut across the questions. The analysis of this data is, therefore

presented here thematically rather than question by question. In each case the theme is addressed with reference to the impact of involvement by stakeholders² in the BBC News School Report project.

The themes are:

1. Partnerships and models of Initial Teacher Education
2. Trainees' professional knowledge and understanding
3. Trainees' professional attributes and identity
4. Trainees' professional skills in respect of personalising learning
5. Freedom, risk, authenticity, creativity and innovation
6. The profile of stakeholders

Each of these themes will be discussed in turn and illustrated by data collected from the evaluation.

4.1 Partnerships and models of Initial Teacher Education

The theme of enhancing partnership was one of the key findings of the evaluation in 2009. It was researched again in 2010, because of the way in which engagement in this project is essentially provider-led, with a concomitant impact on the whole ITE partnership. This is in contrast to the 'default' mode in which individual schools take part in the project (liaising directly with the BBC). The theme of enhancing partnership emerged strongly in response to research question 1 (motivations for taking part), with providers, in particular, citing 'developing partnership relations' and improved experience on school placement as a reason for taking part.

"To develop partnerships with... schools and trainees, improving the school teaching experience." (Provider)

"[We] started last year as a bolt-on..." (Provider, with inference that this year was more integrated.)

As in 2009, the project provided examples of different ways of working within ITE partnerships. These included:

- The requirement for trainees to work in two schools leading to arrangements being made between those schools for continuity of engagement in the project.

"Now I understand better what to say to my trainees: to get into their second placement schools and immediately introduce themselves to the teacher running the project, making it known that they have had the training and offer their skills." (Provider)

- The use of City Learning Centres as hubs for the partnership, involving the school and provider.
- Families of schools working together.
- Trainees working together in a common placement, but from different subject disciplines, extending the notion of partnership *within a school*.
- Past-trainees returning to mentor trainees thus developing the partnership's understanding of the project over time. There is scope here for a longitudinal study of engagement by individuals and the impact on career progression beyond QTS.

It was also found that partners, and especially trainees, perceived the rhythm of their training to be a key factor in the impact of their work in the project. If a trainee's two placements straddled the lifetime of the project then extra barriers were thrown up to their engagement. While this was seen by some to be a positive (for the reason given above of links being made between schools), it was also a barrier if the change of school prevented continued working on the project. In contrast to last year, there was less issue than this year concerning contact with the BBC, because this improved change had taken place and this may be evidence of the maturing of the understanding of the needs of the project and of the ITE providers on all sides.

There were also some issues raised about the way in which the project could be fitted into the partnership and ITE programme as a whole if only a small number of trainees were involved. This came through in some of the responses to the second research question concerning project fit.

"[It fitted] fairly well. Not many schools took part which made embedding the project into the ITE programme difficult. This didn't detract from the experience as a whole" (Provider).

"Can... [fit as] can only bid for 1 or 2 schools" (Provider)

Again the issue of 'fit' was related to the 'rhythm' of the programme and the timeline of the project.

"[It did not fit] easily, invitation came in November. Course started in October, [ITE programme] planned in July/Aug" (Provider)

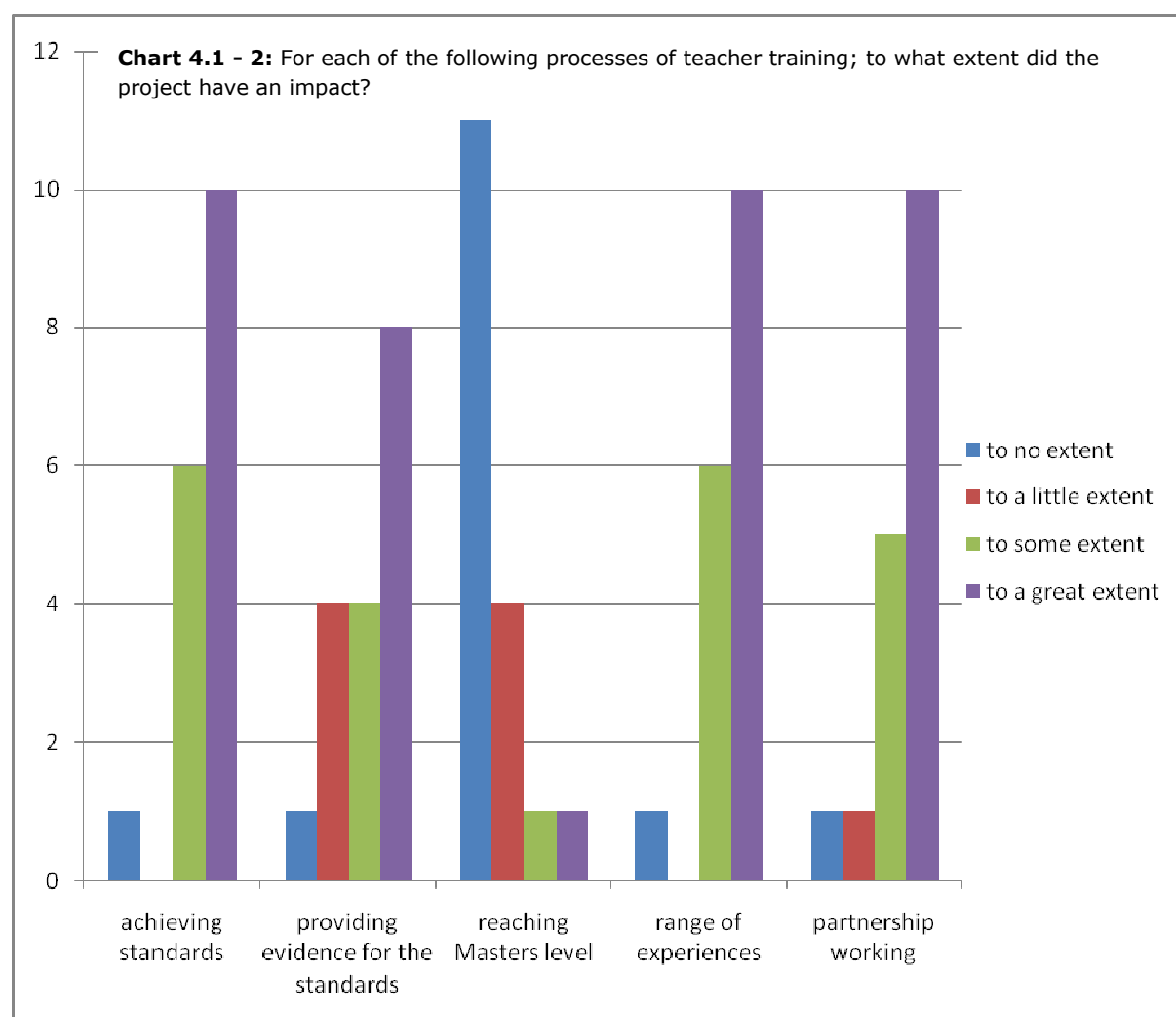
Issues such as this though may be ameliorated with planning and repeated engagement in the project. Without such embedding, however, such views as below may persist:

"...it didn't [fit] – it was extra-curricular [to the ITE programme]."

On the other hand, where it is embedded then it may be seen as

"a bonus [which] fits into the programme and doesn't replace anything."
(Provider)

Overall the survey showed that, with respect to the processes of teacher training, the project had a significant impact, particularly in respect to: partnership working, achieving and gaining evidence of the standards and providing a range of experiences.

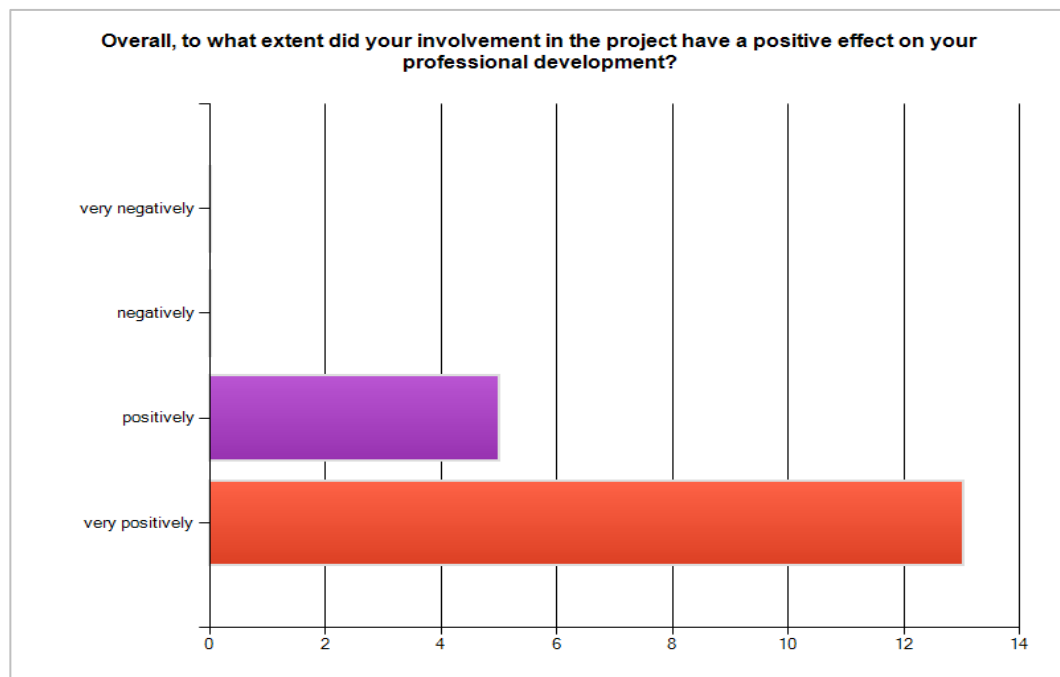


4.2 Trainees' professional knowledge and understanding

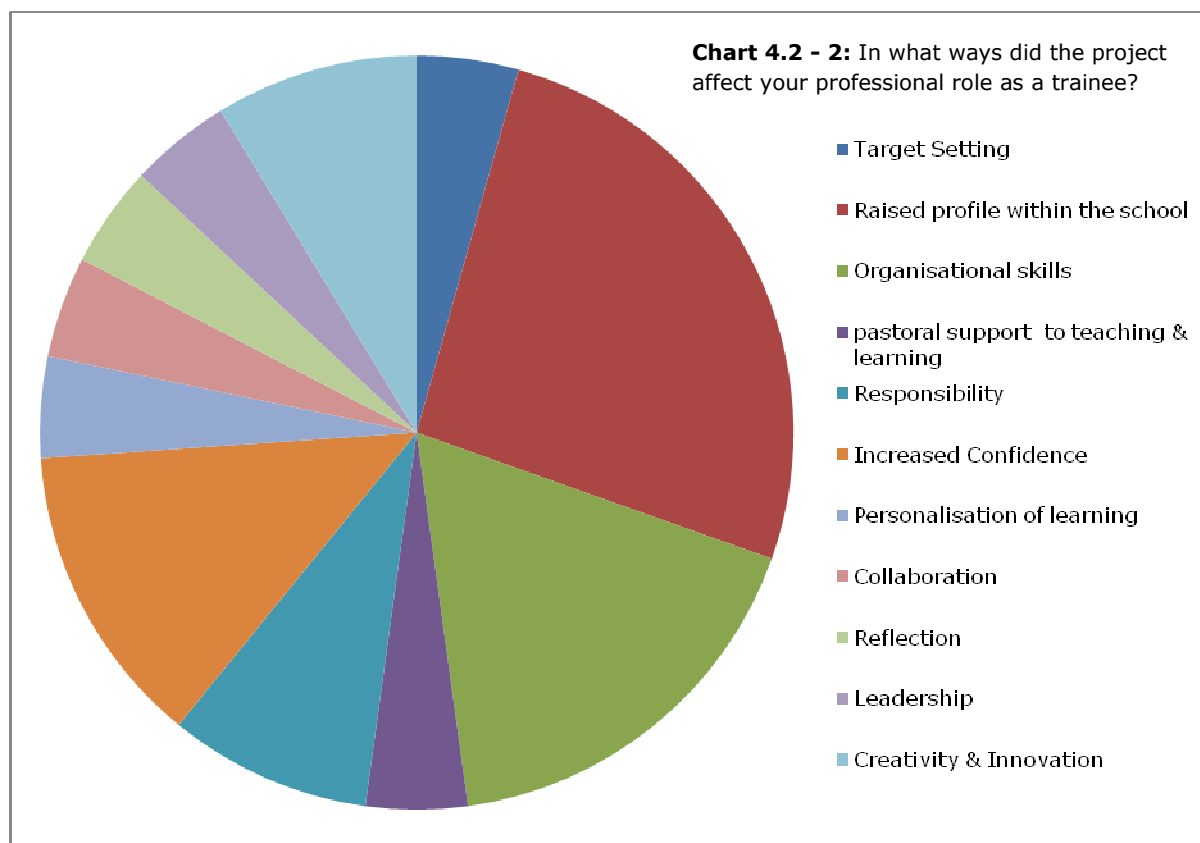
The survey data showed that 100% of trainees reported a positive impact of the project on their professional development.

The impact on professional development is seen in the trainees' responses on the survey (n=21):

Chart 4.2 - 1 Impact on Professional Development



Trainees reported that the project had the greatest impact in raising their profile within the school. Also greatly impacted were trainees' organisational skills and an increase in their confidence.



With respect to trainees' professional knowledge and understanding, the analysis of the data showed a wide range of impacts. These included impact on knowledge and understanding of

- The use of ICT in specialist subjects
- The curriculum, including the ICT curriculum
- technical skills
- cross-curricular working
- extra-curricular approaches

In particular, rich evidence was reported as being developed from the project for the QTS standards. The enhancement of trainees' subject knowledge and technical skills provided evidence for standard Q14. Further, in providing opportunities for trainees to work in cross-curricular and extra-curricular contexts, it provided evidence for standards Q17 and Q23.

In response to research question 1, providers reported motivations in joining the project that led to

"Trainees meeting standards and varying, enrichment activities to the trainees and pupils."

"...an additional, compelling training experience to the ITE process."

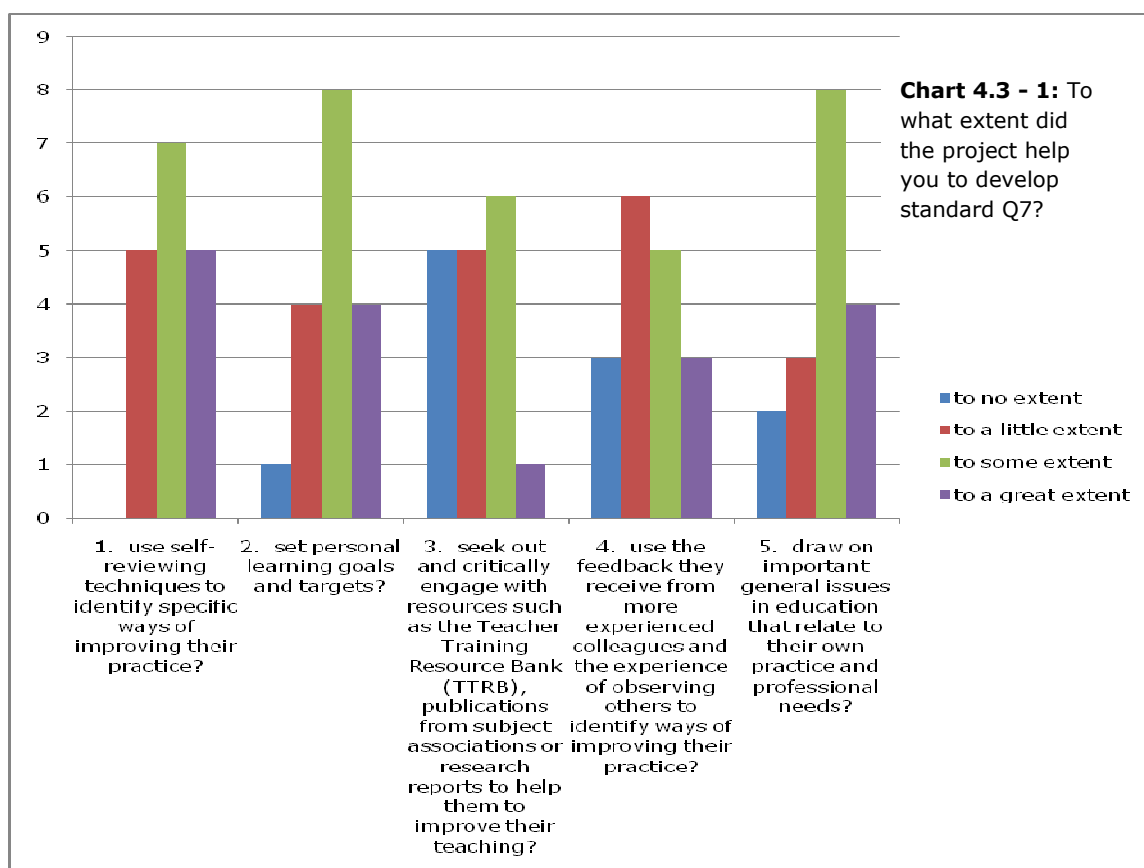
"...an important [opportunity] for the trainees to experience an extracurricular activity which was securely linked to learning outcomes."

This was supported by trainees who reported *enhanced opportunities* for cross-curricular work, work outside the classroom, different teaching approaches, development of technical ICT and media skills and greater understanding of gifted and talented pupils in their motivation for, and the benefits perceived through, taking part. Benefits were also seen in it being a whole school project that provided opportunities for *"thinking outside the box"*. (Trainee)

4.3 Trainees' professional attributes and identity

The survey data showed that:

- All trainees reported that participating in the project enabled them to reflect on their experience.
- Over 90% of trainees reported that it helped them to set personal learning goals and targets and to draw on general issues in education that related to their own practice.
- Over 80% of trainees were able to use feedback to identify areas where they could improve their practice
- While 75% reported that the project enabled them to seek out and critically engage with teaching resources.



Teachers in training can be seen as subservient or dependent on other staff in the school. The findings of this evaluation would seem to show that if they are given roles of responsibility in such projects then their self-perception of role is modified to one in which they see themselves, and are seen, as equals to qualified staff, rather than subservient or dependent on them. Furthermore, engagement in such projects leads to trainees collecting richer, more holistic evidence for meeting the Standards as they take greater ownership for this process, situating it in their leading role in the project. Their identity becomes defined less by the articulation of Standards and by their subservient relationship to others and more by their own notions of professionalism. Data showed the emergence of richer reflections on practice than other teaching experiences the trainees had undertaken.

"...encouraged trainees to develop as a reflective practitioner." (Provider)

"it allowed to me to further develop as a reflective practitioner from being able to see other trainee teachers teach." (Trainee)

Engagement in the project thus seemed to lead to an accelerated development of professional identity and a changed relationship to others. On a more pragmatic level it accelerated the trainees' confidence and professional development as evidenced for standard Q7 and led to – different relationships between trainees and other school staff.

"I found the experience very valuable for developing relationships with pupils as they saw me in a context other than the science lab." (Trainee)

"I had to be very organized and be seen as an established member of staff who was completely in control." (Trainee)

"The project helped enable me to collaborate with other staff members and trainees more effectively. It brought more awareness of certain legal issues..." (Trainee)

"The project gave me confidence during my initial project to liaise with the ICT and other departments." (Trainee)

"...it gave me responsibility, my ability to work alongside colleagues outside [the] classroom context." (Trainee)

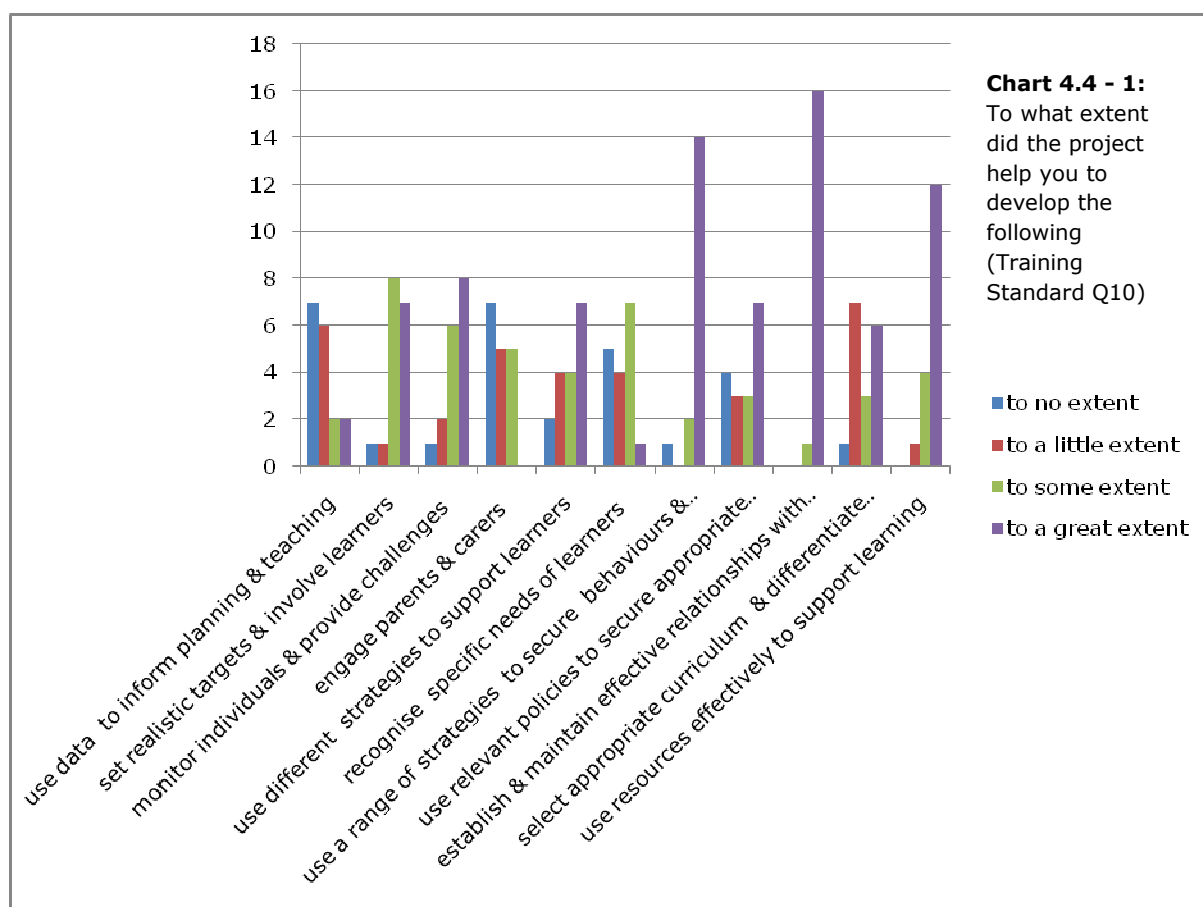
"...trainees saw other trainees in a different way." (Provider)

"...it developed interdepartmental collaborative work and understanding." (Trainee)

4.4 Trainees' professional skills in respect of personalising learning

In focus group discussions it emerged that the project had particularly helped trainees collect evidence for standards Q30, Q31 and Q32. Trainees talked about how the project extended the variety of learning environments in which they taught. In this way they felt the project provided a complimentary and in some cases, unique opportunity.

Trainees reported that the greatest impact of the project was on creating and maintaining effective relationships with pupils and other staff. There was also a great impact on the trainees' ability to use strategies to control learning behaviours and effectively use resources to support learning.



Trainees working with others (Q30) has been mentioned in many of the sections and testifies to the project providing a wealth of opportunities for trainees to develop this professional attribute and for collecting robust evidence for this standard.

Evidence for Standard Q31 was collected by trainees, because they felt that pupils showed greater independence of learning in the School Report context (and concomitant personalisation) than in 'usual' types of lessons due to the ownership of the content and tasks by pupils. Trainees reported this as a factor that motivated their participation in the project, and some thought this was a unique opportunity for genuine personalisation. Passey (2009) and Underwood

et al (2008) also argues that whilst much work in schools is reported as providing authentic pupil led learning experiences, on closer examination this is rarely the case. However, with the BBC New School Report, this is a genuine example of such personalisation practice.

We argue that there is scope here for more probing in any subsequent evaluation as it may not have been expected that trainees would have predicted this prior to engagement in the project. Trainees in the focus groups were particularly reflective on how the project had, in positive ways, affected their relationships with the pupils and their ability to manage independent learning in the context of the project.

4.4 Freedom, risk, authenticity, creativity, innovation

88% of trainees reported that the project provided evidence of an example of innovation which could be used to evidence training standard Q8.

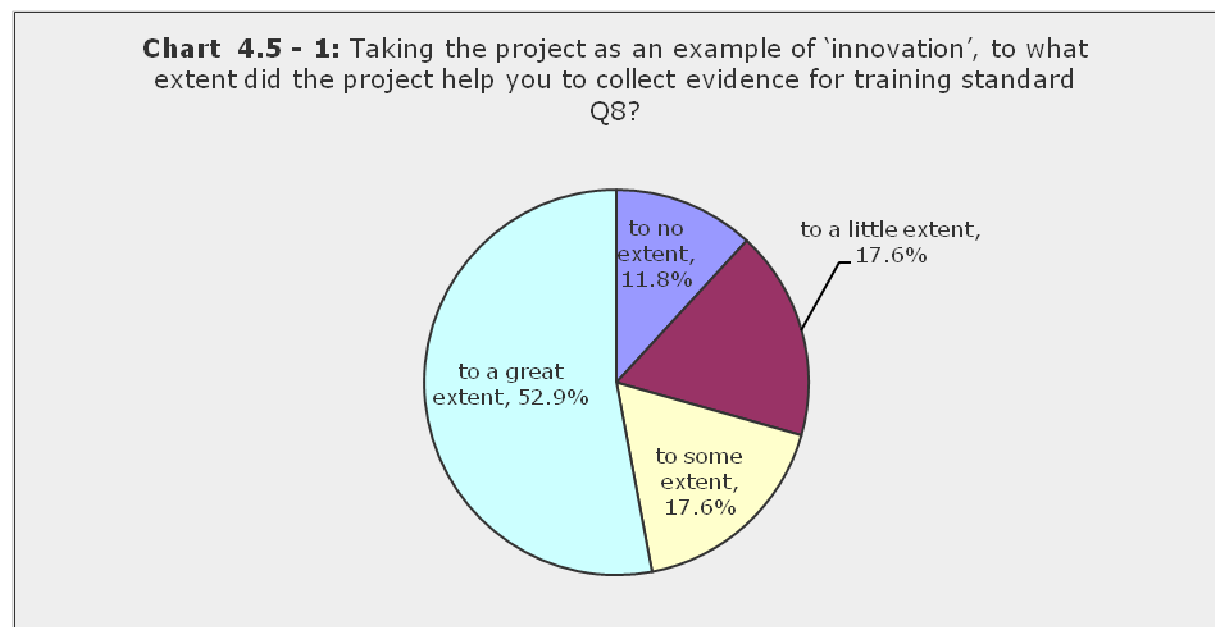


Chart 4.5 -1 Correlation of effect on professional development against extent to which project provided evidence for Q8 (innovation). Trainees' responses (n=21)



Trainees were given more freedoms, encouraged to take risks and to engage with authentic tasks. This provided evidence for standards Q8, Q10 and Q30.

These freedoms came from working outside of trainees normal classrooms, being given leadership for the project and through working with others. Trainees reported that were able to take responsibility in ways that they hadn't been able to before and that this came with the need to take risks. The element of risk taking was reported by all stakeholders.

In taking a lead, trainees reported more ownership of their teaching. This gave greater authenticity to lesson planning and reflections on teaching, which mirrored the authenticity of the task being undertaken by the pupils as they worked in a 'real-world' environment (to produce 'live' news for the 11th March deadline). Trainees were encouraged to be innovative. This was not necessarily in absolute terms – doing things that no one had done before – but in seeing and doing things differently through engagement with others. Trainees reported working with pupils in different ways and in different contexts to those which they were used to on placement. In this sense, the project provided deeply enriching and enhanced learning experiences and an additional "*compelling training*" (Trainee) opportunity.

Where trainees, *worked with other trainees* this was seen as a particularly powerful model of learning, leading to shared peer reflections and co-development of ideas. While this could happen in other, non-project, contexts the project allowed greater freedom as it was beyond the 'normal' ITE

programme and classroom context. The most striking evidence of this was the group of trainees who reported that it provided them with the only opportunity to teach that was not monitored by formal observations, which encouraged the trainees to be more innovative and willing to take risks with learning. This opportunity enabled trainees not only to work in contexts other than the classroom, for example; many worked in City Learning Centres (CLCs), but also with teachers and other professionals with a variety of expertise.

4.5 Raising the profile of stakeholders

The profile of all stakeholders engaged in the project was unanimously reported to have been raised. Providers reported that their ITE programme was raised; mentors said school profiles were raised in the local community and trainees' profiles were raised within their school settings.

Trainees: The profile of trainees was enhanced, leading to increased perception of employability. As in 2009, there were many examples of trainees citing their involvement in the project as a key factor in gaining employment, often with the school in which they undertook the project. It would appear that the salient factors enhancing employability were: increased confidence, exposure to different ways of working, developing whole school approaches and gathering richer evidence for standards, which trainees stated served them well in interview.

"It has allowed me to raise my profile throughout the school and work with staff from other departments, which has helped my development."
(Trainee)

"... raised my status within the school, in the eyes of the pupils, English dept. [staff]and Head." (Trainee)

"...developed leadership skills;...raised profile in current school." (Trainee)

"It gave me a feeling of pride in the success of the project and in the recognition I received from other staff and senior leadership members."
(Trainee)

"Responsible role - integration into school - improve profile in school"
(Trainee)

The most significant impact of the project on trainees was the development of their leadership skills as evidenced in the quotes below:

"...[the project] meets the standards but also meets level descriptors for [Ofsted] grade one trainees¹ i.e. potential for leadership." (Provider)

"...it shows trainees' leadership [capabilities within] a whole school approach." (Provider)

"...developed leadership skills;...raised profile in current school." (Trainee)

"The project allowed the Associate Teacher within the school to have a good reputation as we were being proactive in running something which the staff could identify as being very beneficial for the pupils..." (Trainee)

"Encourages and gives trainees opportunities to lead enrichment that is valued by pupils." (School Mentor)

The trainees felt that the project provided a unique opportunity to develop their leadership skills.

The data for research question 1 (on motivation) indicated that some schools and some providers saw raising their profile as a key motivator for taking part. Factors here included the prestige and 'kudos' of working with the BBC, working on a national project and the production of output that would be seen by others, both *within* and *beyond* the school. Enhancing the status of the school in the local community was cited as important by the mentors and helped secure the schools' participation from heads and senior leaders. Trainees consistently reported on the positive PR that schools had been able to leverage from their work. Looking at a more internal school profile, trainees reported the raising of self-esteem across the school as other pupils took pride in seeing their school on a national BBC news website.

One provider stated that *"[taking part] looks good on the self-evaluation document"*. Thus it was not just trainees who were able to develop evidence from the project. Some ITE providers also claimed that the project was used as a promotional tool for recruitment onto their ITE programme. Participation provided all stakeholders with enhanced status.

¹ Trainees are graded on a four point scale with 1 being the strongest. The grading criteria are laid down by OfSTED, the Office for Standards in Education who have responsibility for quality assurance of education in England.

5 Enablers and barriers

From the focus group evaluations, a range of factors were identified that helped *facilitate* the project and a range of other factors that were identified as hindering the project; these were analysed as enablers and barriers. See tables 5.1 Enablers and 5.2 Barriers for further information.

Table 5.1 Enablers to the success of the project

Themes	Issues
Support	<p>Where the senior management team (SMT) were involved and supportive, the trainees found that their and the project's profile was raised in the school. This led to increased support and interest across the school and facilitated the trainee's delivery of the project and also their ability to take pupils out of class and school in order to complete the project. Trainees also became involved in SMT and school family meetings, presenting the project to a wider audience.</p> <p>Where school mentors and teachers across the school had previous experience of the project and / or were supportive, the trainees found it was possible to apply more effort into the project with interested teachers encouraging them and the pupils in the project. In one instance, when the trainees had left the school for their second placement, they were able to arrange for the live day and their return for that day through email and telephone contact as a result of that support.</p> <p>Where CLCs were used for the project, their support and technical expertise greatly enhanced to success of the project for pupils and trainees.</p> <p>Support from HEI tutors included the use of technical resources such as digital cameras, which may not be available in school. Where HEI tutors were inspirational in their introduction of the project and communicated the benefits, trainees became more enthusiastic about the project.</p> <p>The BBC training and resources were reported to be excellent. Where trainees were aware of and used the telephone support lines, especially on the live day, they greatly facilitated the success of the project.</p>
Communication	<p>Where communication between stakeholders was effective, for example, the trainees organising the live day in their first placement school from their second placement school and the BBC help lines were used; the project was reported to be more successful.</p> <p>Likewise, where the aims of the project were effectively communicated through the school, the profile was raised to the benefit of all those involved with the project.</p> <p>Where the BBC communicated effectively about the sometimes minimalistic and always realistic expectations for the project, trainees felt they could participate and recognise the worth of their project's end product.</p> <p>Where trainees worked collaboratively in a team, the cross fertilisation of trainees sharing their subject specialisations, learning styles and previous experience was reported to have enhanced not only the success of the project but <i>greatly enhanced</i> the trainees' individual professional development.</p>
Time	<p>Where the training day was early in the academic year the dissemination of the project to trainees was greatly facilitated. Hence, more trainees were able to participate.</p>

Table 5.2 Barriers to the success of the project

Themes	Issues
Support	<p>Where there was less interest from the Senior Management team, it was reported that a barrier between trainees and staff was created. The subsequent lack of support greatly hindered the trainees' attempts to organise the lessons required and in some cases the project was dropped.</p> <p>This lack of support created a barrier to the trainees overcoming the administrative hurdles required to complete the project, for example, when it was required to take pupils out of school.</p> <p>Where there was insufficient or no technological support in the way of resources or staff, this impacted negatively on the project's success.</p>
Communication	<p>Where the minimalistic and realistic requirements for the project had not been effectively communicated to the trainees they sometimes felt overwhelmed by the perceived expectations. This led to some trainees not completing the project.</p> <p>Where the relevancy of the project to ITE (such as training standards, enhanced professional development and employability) was not communicated effectively to providers, the providers were less likely to promote the project.</p>
Time	<p>Where the trainees understood that they could use the project as evidence for their achievement of the training standards and written reflections as part of their portfolio, the time was viewed as less of a barrier.</p> <p>Where there was little notice of BBC training days and the number of places available it was difficult for stakeholders to organise attendance even when they wished to attend.</p> <p>Where the project was introduced (BBC training days) late in the academic year the providers could no longer adjust the placements appropriately nor could they introduce the project to the whole cohort of trainees.</p> <p>The timing, from the lessons beginning in the Autumn term and the live day in March coincided with a heavy course workload for many trainees, which created a time barrier to full participation.</p> <p>Time was also a barrier when pupils were not permitted time out of lessons and an extra time commitment was required during lunch time, after school or even weekend working. This was a barrier for pupils as well as trainees and those required to supervise them.</p>

6 Recommendations

Following the evaluation of the impact of the BBC News School Report project on trainees undertaking Initial Teacher Education programmes in England in 2009-2010, a number of recommendations can be made.

1. That the TDA continues to fund this initiative with the BBC News School Report project because:

- a) It reinforces and *enhances partnership relations* between HEIs and schools (and with City Learning Centres in some cases).
- b) The project enhances the *professional identity of trainees* and can act as a fast track to career development in terms of providing opportunities for leadership.
- c) As a corollary to the above, the leadership affordances of the project enables providers to grade trainees as a '1' in Ofsted terms; with providers citing clear and robust evidence through the project to secure this grading. In some cases, the project provided a unique opportunity to secure a grade 1.

2. It is recommended that the TDA ensures effective communication between all stakeholders on the project, and this is engendered from the outset.

- a) For the TDA: communication with providers; it is recommended that the providers are invited to bid to participate by the TDA earlier in the academic year; this can be nearer to the start of term in the autumn, or even earlier, with some providers requesting the end of summer.
- b) For the BBC; those that BBC materials that are sent to schools are also sent to participating providers; thereby ensuring communication links between the BBC, schools and providers which facilitates the sharing of information across all the stakeholders.

3. The TDA may wish to consider the opportunity to use this year's trainees to act as mentors to next year's trainees. It may be possible to facilitate this through the use of technology, with a 'trainee – mentor' finding scheme. This could lead to enhancing the professional development of the mentors and aiding retention within the teaching profession, which could be assessed through a longer term evaluation of the project and its impact on retention. Similarly, the effect of the project on career progression and fast tracking could be investigated.

4. Partnership agreements; it is recommended that schools with partnership agreements, when negotiating partnership involvement, agree to release trainees to: attend the 'live' BBC News day on 11th March and, to attend the 'end

of project' evaluation day in order to assess the impact of the project on the trainee's experience.

Overall, we recommend that the TDA continue its involvement with the BBC School Report project as it provides a valuable experience for all stakeholders. The data indicates that in some places the project provides some unique opportunities for trainees to work with pupils and other professionals in non standard learning contexts.

7 References

ITTE (2009) *BBC School Report Project in Initial Teacher Education*, London: ITTE

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TDA (2008) *Professional Standards for Qualified Teacher Status and Requirements for Initial Teacher Training (Revised 2008)*, London: TDA available online at http://www.tda.gov.uk/upload/resources/pdf/p/professional_standards_2008.pdf

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8 Appendices

8.1 Sample

A total of 27 respondents attended the focus group evaluation events. There were 41 respondents to the online survey. Of those; 13 were providers, 6 were school mentors and 21 were trainees.

About half of these completed the survey before the evaluation events; the rest completed it during the event.

Five telephone interviews were conducted with respondents who were unable to attend the evaluation day. One was with a school mentor; the other 4 were with providers.

Table 8.1 Sample of all respondents

Data Collection Method	Sample			Total
	Providers	Mentors	Trainees	
Focus Groups	8	0	19	27
Telephone Interviews	4	1	0	5
Online Survey	13	6	21	41

The numbers of respondents attending the focus group evaluation event varied at each venue. (see table 8.2)

Table 8.2 Table to show focus group respondents at the three evaluation days

Institution hosting the evaluation event	Providers	School Mentors	Trainees	Others	Researchers
Edge Hill University	2	0	6	+ 1 BBC + 1 TDA	+3 ITTE researchers
Nottingham Trent University	4 3 GTP training managers + 1 ITE Partnership manager	0	7	+1 BBC +3 TDA + 1 technician	+ 2 ITTE researchers
Goldsmiths – University of London	2	0	6	+ 1 TDA + 2 BBC	+ 3 ITTE researchers
Totals	8	0	19	4 BBC 5 TDA	4 ITTE Researchers

8.2 Survey Data

Introduction

An online survey was constructed to collect data in relation to the research questions. This data collection tool had the advantage of enabling data to be collected from all participants, including those who had been unable to attend the evaluation days.

Methodology

On April 14th 2010 the survey was posted online and e-mail notification sent to all providers and those school mentors who had provided e-mail addresses. Providers were asked to forward the e-mail to schools and other organisations, such as CLCs, that were engaged in the project within a provider's teacher training partnership. It was also requested that the survey was forwarded to trainees taking part in the project.

The survey asked for responses using the Likert scale with opportunity for free text expansion at the end of each section. Questions were devised to elicit views around the research questions and key themes under evaluation:

5. From an ITE perspective, what were the reasons for providers taking part in this project?
6. How did the project fit in with the existing ITE programme?
7. From an ITE perspective, how did the project fit in and impact upon trainees' experience in school?
8. What were the enablers and barriers to the success of the project? (With particular reference to the trainee experience and Standards Q7, Q8, Q10, Q30, Q31 and Q32.)

Sample

There were 41 respondents to the online survey. Of those; 13 were providers, 6 were school mentors and 21 were trainees.

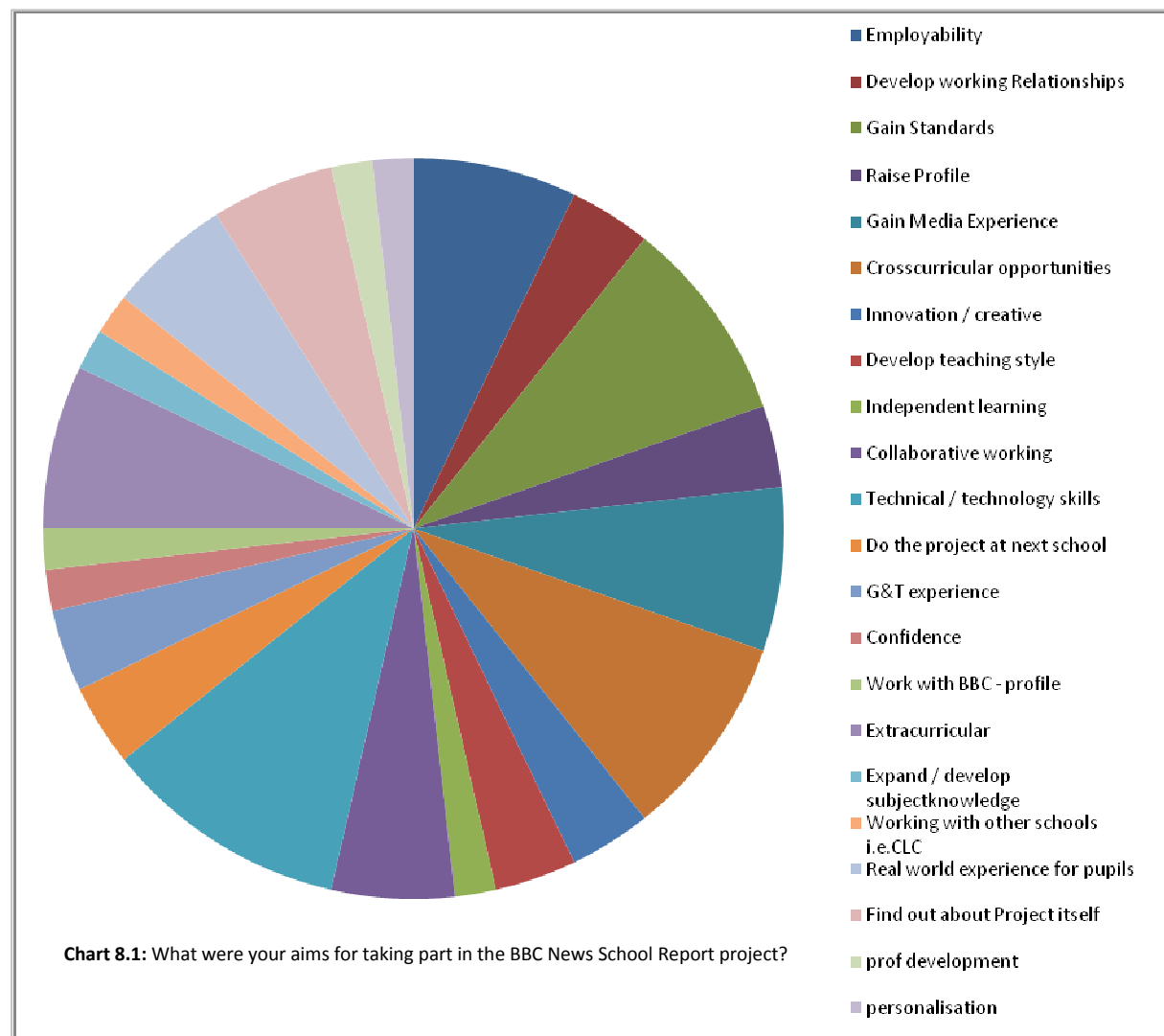
There was some cross referencing intended to elicit further and deeper comment, for example enquiring about the factors contributing to the success of the project section A; Q 3 and section E; Q1. These responses have been collated as responses to the one question here.

Findings and Analysis:

Section A: All Respondents

Section A, Q1: What were your aims for taking part in the BBC News School Report project?

Trainees:



The trainees' motivations for taking part in the BBC News School Report were: gaining technical / technological skills (ICT); cross & extra-curricular opportunities; gaining further evidence for the training standards and enhancing future employability.

Other motivations include the desire to find out about the project to use in future teaching; to provide pupils with a real world experience and an opportunity to collaborate with colleagues.

Also important to the trainees was the opportunity to raise their profile across the school and to develop working relationships with other staff and subject areas. It was anticipated that being involved in a high profile project would create opportunities to innovate and teach creatively developing trainees' teaching style and promoting independent learning that would increase their confidence. Trainees subsequently reported that this was realised.

School Mentors

Three out of the six mentors responding viewed the project as a good opportunity for their gifted and talented pupils.

Extracurricular and subject development opportunities were viewed as important while it was felt that this was an "interesting project" that would raise the "school profile" whilst providing opportunities for "personal and professional development" through "collaboration" and it would "provide pupils with an enjoyable, worthwhile experience" through which they would "learn valuable new skills".

Providers

For the providers, the motivations related to the perceived benefits for the trainees, the pupils, the school and themselves as H E institutions.

Six out of 14 respondents (42%) valued the project for the "real life learning experience" providing "enrichment" for the pupils.

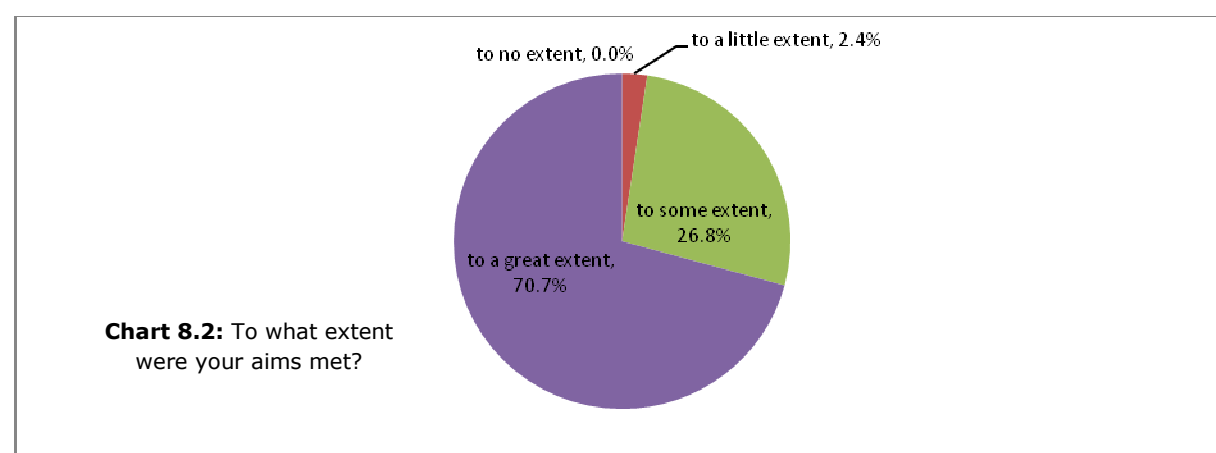
The providers were eager to encourage schools to take part in what is viewed as a "good, effective project, developing partnerships" between and themselves schools.

The aim was for the project to "raise the provider's profile", improving "links with industry and the TDA".

7 out of 14 providers (50%) were motivated by the opportunities for trainees to gain "extracurricular and creative learning experiences". Motivations also included other opportunities for the trainees to "experience and manage the project", which gives the trainee experience of "extra-curricular activities" and in particular "media experience", which enhances their subject knowledge. All this will "add value" to the trainees which will enhance their "employability".

Q 2: All respondents: To what extent where your aims met?

98% of all respondents reported that their aims were met.



Q3: All Respondents: What are the factors in the project that led to the project's success, or not, for you?

Trainees:

Support was the most mentioned factor, from in-school support, such as permitting time out of class for pupils, support from the BBC, including the resources and the initial training day, and providers together with the collaborative nature of the project.

The fact that this was a high profile project contributed to its success as it generated enthusiasm which motivated the pupils.

Other factors which contributed to the success of the project included the trainees' freedom to be creative in their teaching and having pupils, or other teachers who had previous experience of the project and

School Mentors:

For the school mentors, support was also an important factor. This included the BBC support, resources and training. Undertaking a high profile, motivational project and enthusiastic pupils together with collaboration across the school was seen as another important factor in the project's success.

Providers:

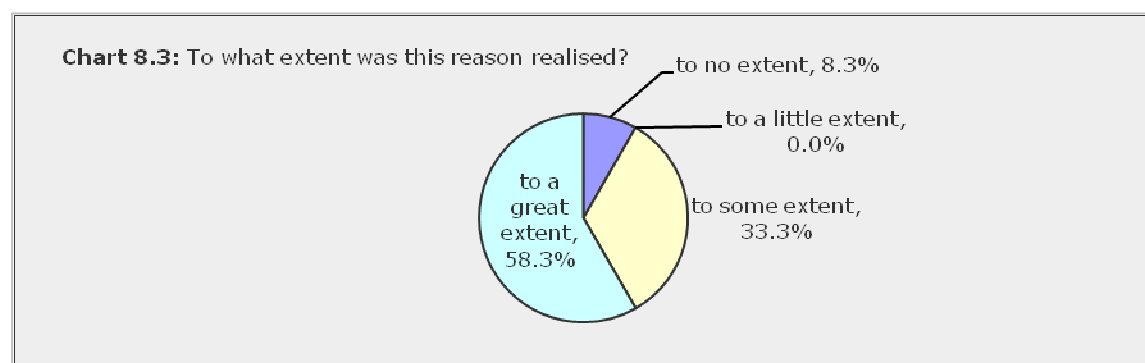
For the providers, having enthusiastic trainees was the most important factor mentioned.

Section B - Providers:

Section B - Q1 & Q5: What was the main reason for taking part in the BBC News School Report Project?

Responses here were mainly a reference back to the previous question; “What were your aims for taking part in the BBC News School Report project?” The responses to Q5 also referred the researchers back to what had already been said.

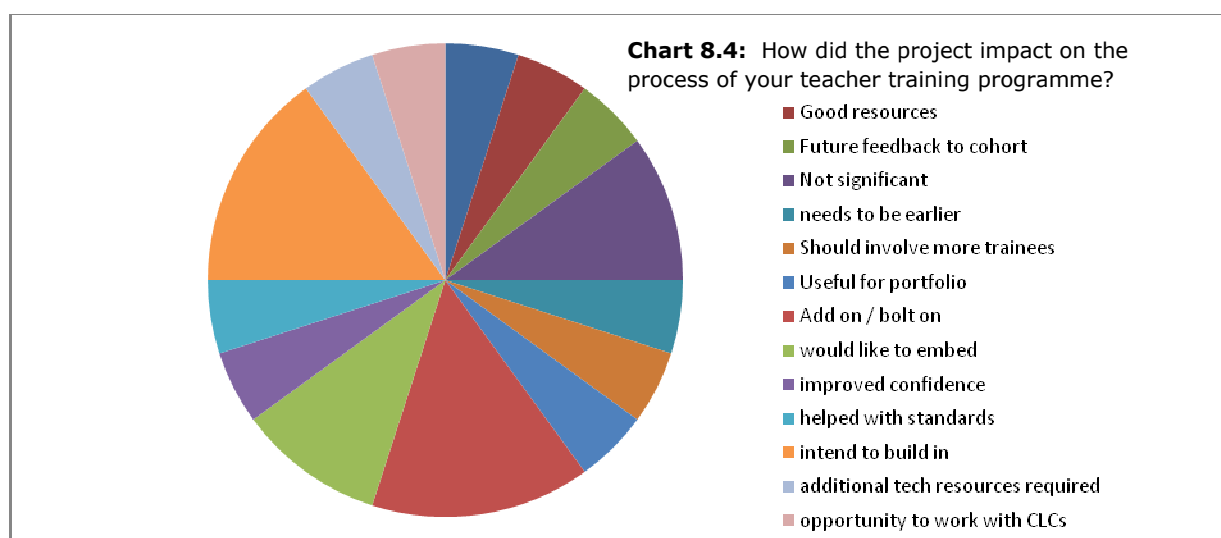
Section B - Q2: To what extent was this reason realised?



Section B - Q3: If you are a lead provider, please tell us your motivation for selecting this role.

There were no responses to this question. However, in the text data there was reference to some providers taking on this role to be helpful. It was also reported as having a positive impact on partnerships with schools.

Section B - Q7: How did the project impact on the process of your teacher training programme?



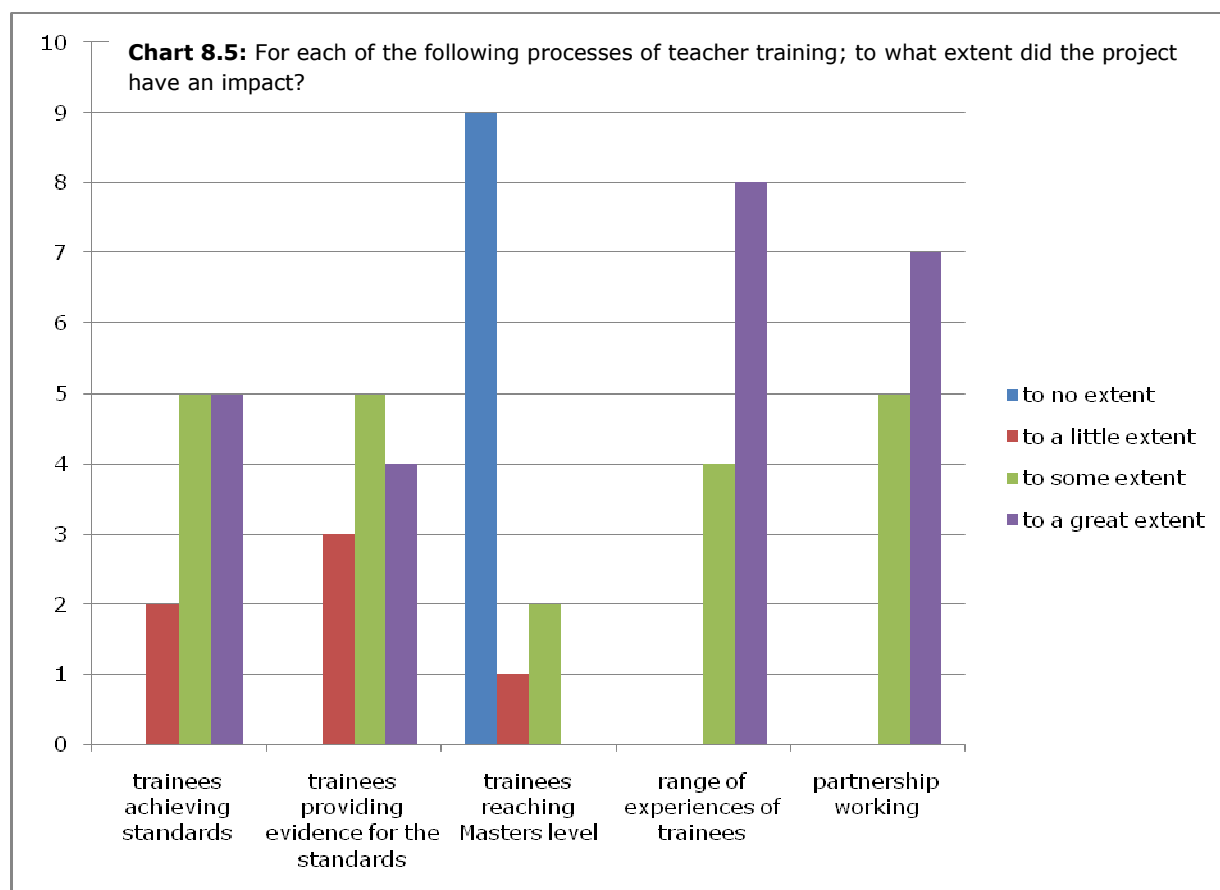
Out of the 14 providers responding; three saw the project as an *"add on"*, but 2 providers would *"like to build the project into"* their training programme while 3 providers *"intend to embed"* the project. Only 2 found that the impact was insignificant. One provider is planning to use this year's trainees to *"feed back to their cohort"* about the project for their NQT year.

In order to do this, it was felt that the project needed to be introduced at an earlier stage in the ITE programme and involve more trainees. For some providers, extra technical resources were required.

Overall, the project was seen as an *"ICT focus"* with *"good resources"* which improved the trainee's *"confidence"* and gave them an opportunity to enhance their *"e-portfolio"* and provide opportunities to work with City Learning Colleges.

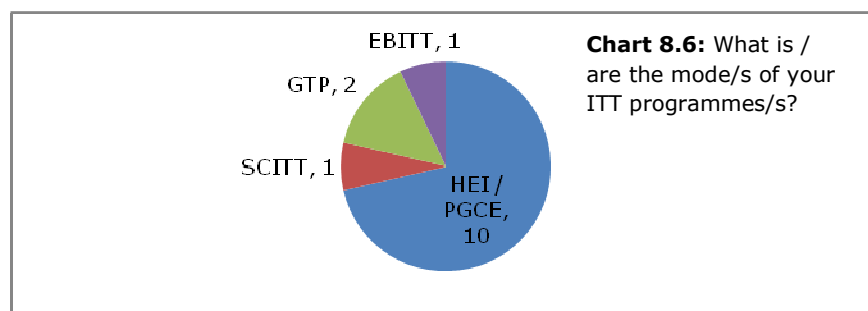
Section B - Q8: For each of the following processes of teacher training; to what extent did the project have an impact?

100% of providers reported that the project had a positive effect on the processes of teacher training, apart from the trainees achieving masters level. Masters level modules are not part of every ITE programme which may account for this.



Section B - Q9: What is / are the mode/s of your ITT programmes/s?

Most providers delivered a PGCE programme (10), with one EBITT, one SCITT and two GTP.

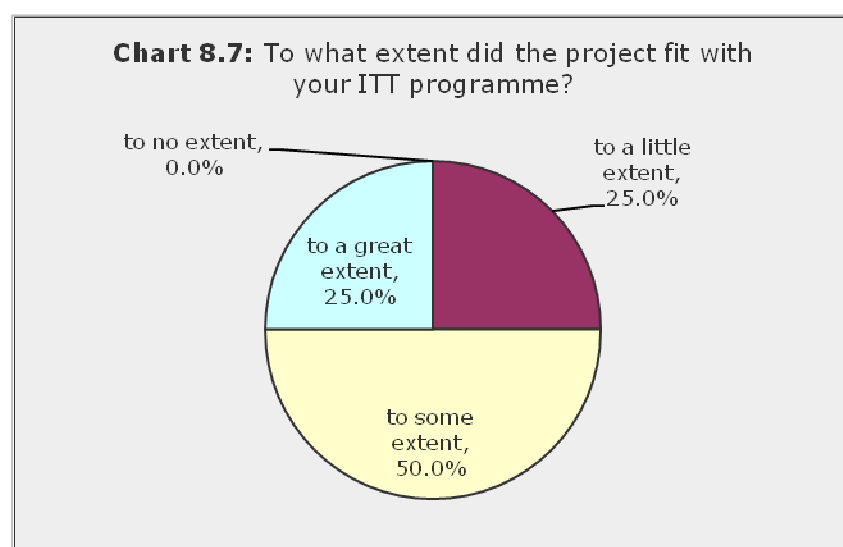


Section B - Q10: What are the rhythms of your ITT programmes? (e.g. You may wish to comment on the placement pattern, contact time norms)

Table 8.3: The reported rhythms of ITT programmes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PGCE :
Three weeks in university, 3 days in school and 2 in university until Christmas. January until February on placement, two weeks in university (end of February beginning of March), placement March through to June, 2 pre-professional weeks in university.
Full time block placements varying from 4 to 12 weeks
10 weeks in the University between Oct and Dec. Thereafter, with the exception of five seminar days, students are in school - hence the need to begin this project much earlier.
The trainees spend 24 weeks in schools; and 12 weeks in university. The first placement spans from October - December. The second placement from mid-January - June.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GTP, SCITT & EBITT have similar rhythms:
Trainees are placed in schools with every Friday in university or used for other study.
Phase 1 - 2 week induction.
Phase 2 - 6 weeks of 3 days in Faculty and 2 days in placement schools; 5 weeks in placement schools on 60% timetable
Phase 3 - 6 weeks of 3 days in Faculty and 2 days in Placement schools
Phase 4 - 15 weeks in placement schools 60% timetable
Phase 5 - 2 week enhancement in Educational settings
A normal academic year all based in one school.
GTP trainees spend over 90% of their training year in either their lead or second school
2 placements :1) 3 days Sept-Dec and then 5 days Jan-Feb 2) 5 days March – June

Section B - Q11: To what extent did the project fit in with your ITT programme?

75% of all providers claimed that the project fitted into their ITT programme.

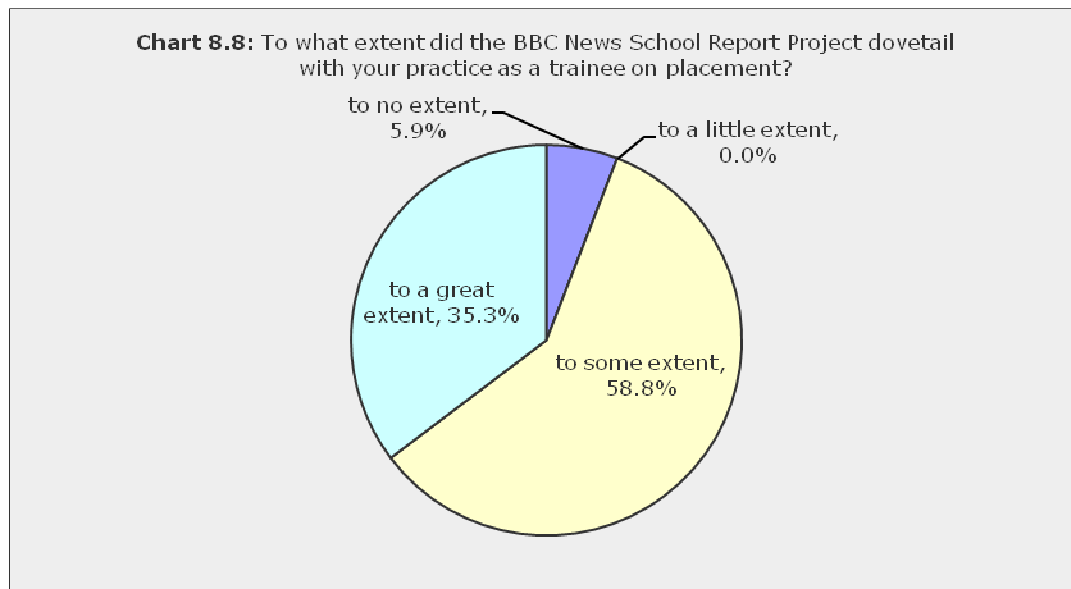


Section C: Trainees

Trainees' professional practice

Section C - Q1: To what extent did the BBC News School Report dovetail with your practice as a trainee on placement?

94% of all trainees claimed that the project dovetailed with their placement practice.



Section C - Q2: What parts of the project were easy to incorporate into your practice as a trainee?

Trainees quoted a range of ways in which the project was easy to incorporate into their practice.

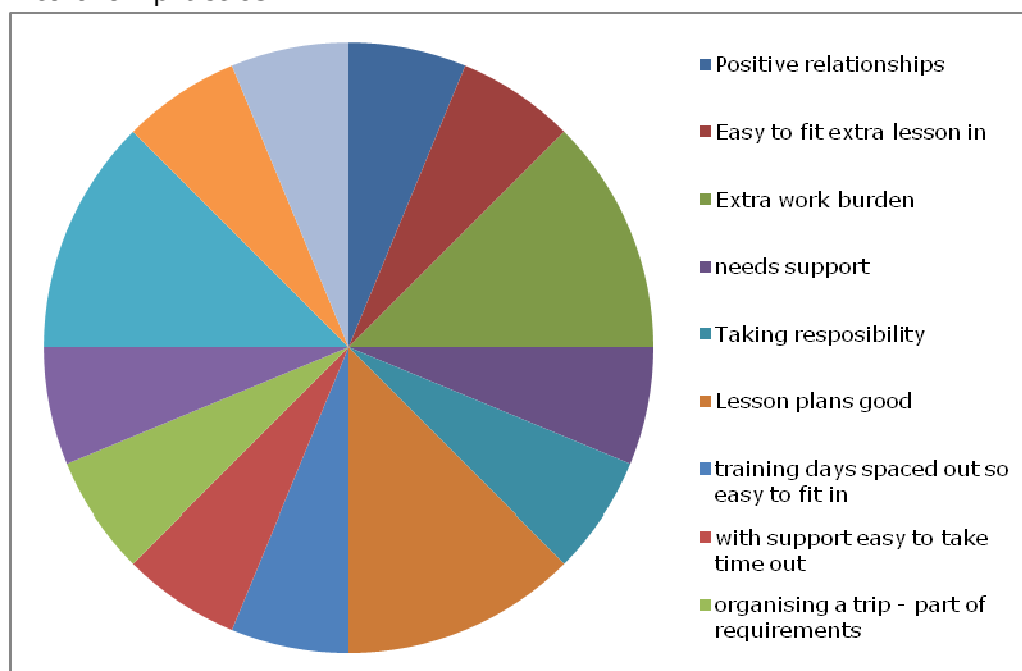
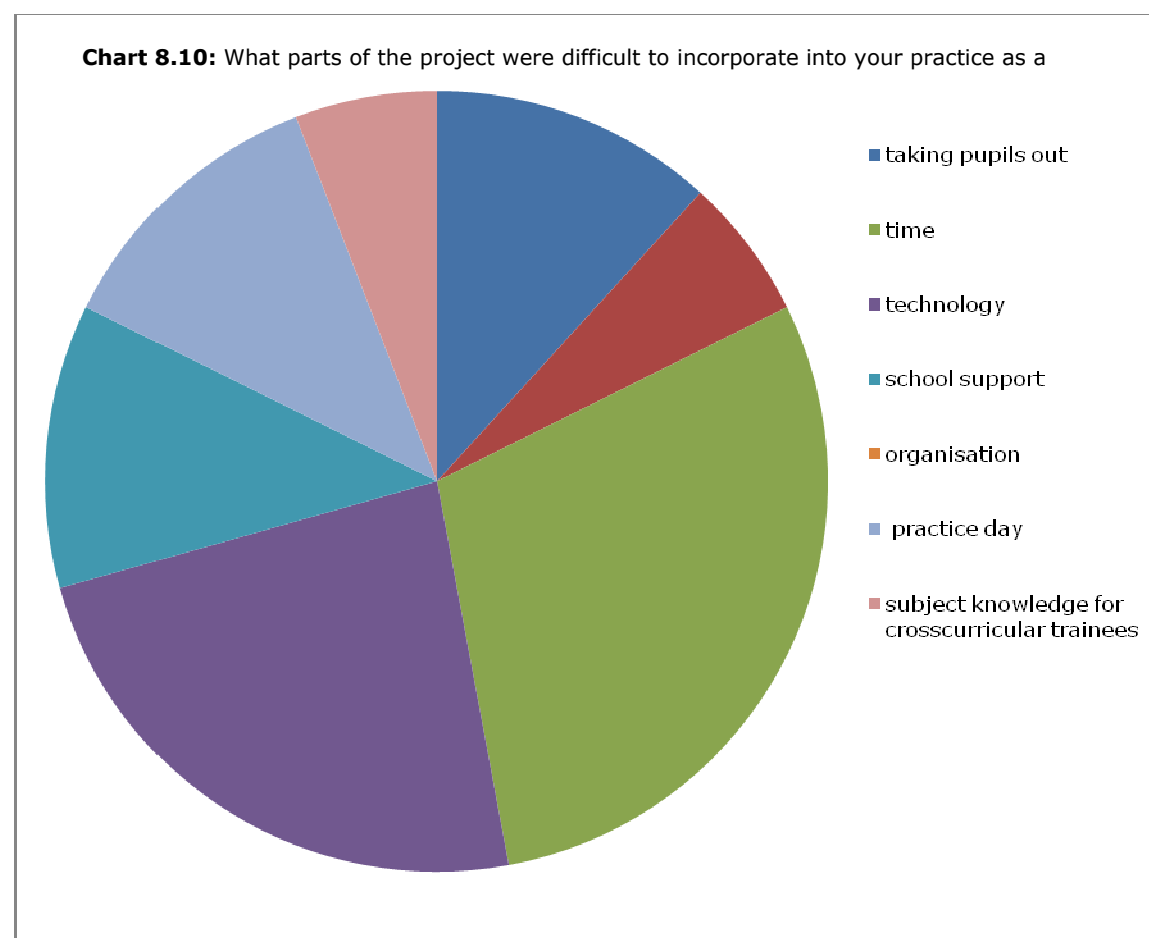


Chart 8.9: What parts of the project were easy to incorporate into your practice as a trainee?

Section C - Q3: Please tell us why

The trainees' reasons depended very much on their individual circumstances. For example, many found an opportunity through the project to work with gifted and talented pupils.

Section C - Q4: What parts of the project were difficult to incorporate into your practice as a trainee?



Section C - Q5: Please tell us why

Trainees reported that the part of the project most difficult to incorporate into their practice was finding sufficient time to manage and deliver the project. Trainees also reported a lack or inadequacy of equipment. There was also an issue of trainees' confidence and competence using the equipment available and software which was linked to the amount of support available.

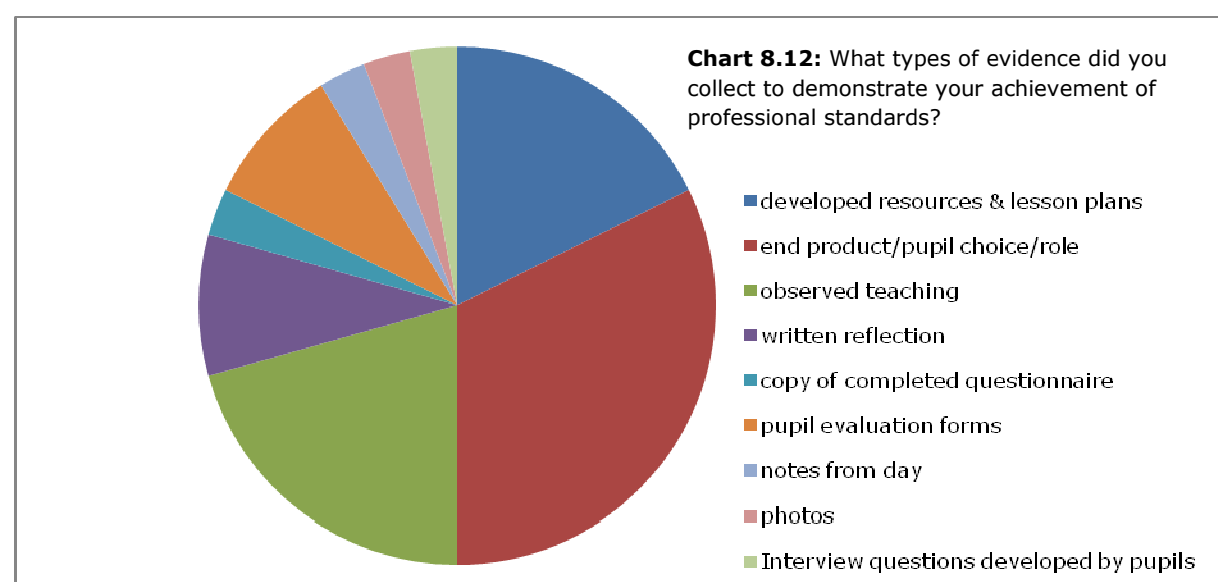
Trainees: meeting and collecting evidence for the Teaching Standards

Section C - Q6: To what extent did the project help you to gather evidence for your professional standards?

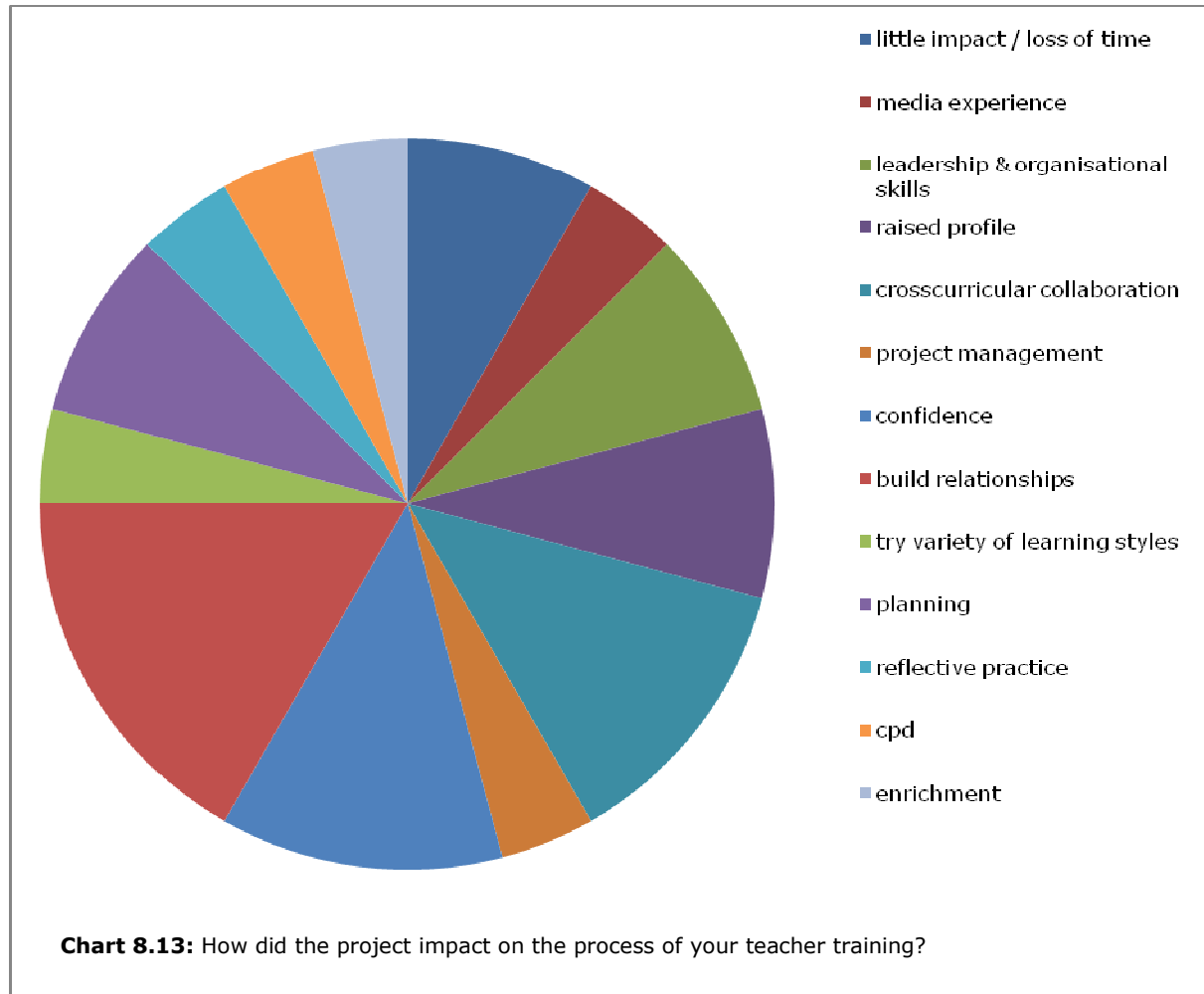
100% of trainees reported that the project helped them to gather evidence for their professional standards. 88% said that this was to some or great extent.



Section C - Q7: What types of evidence did you collect to demonstrate your achievement of professional standards?

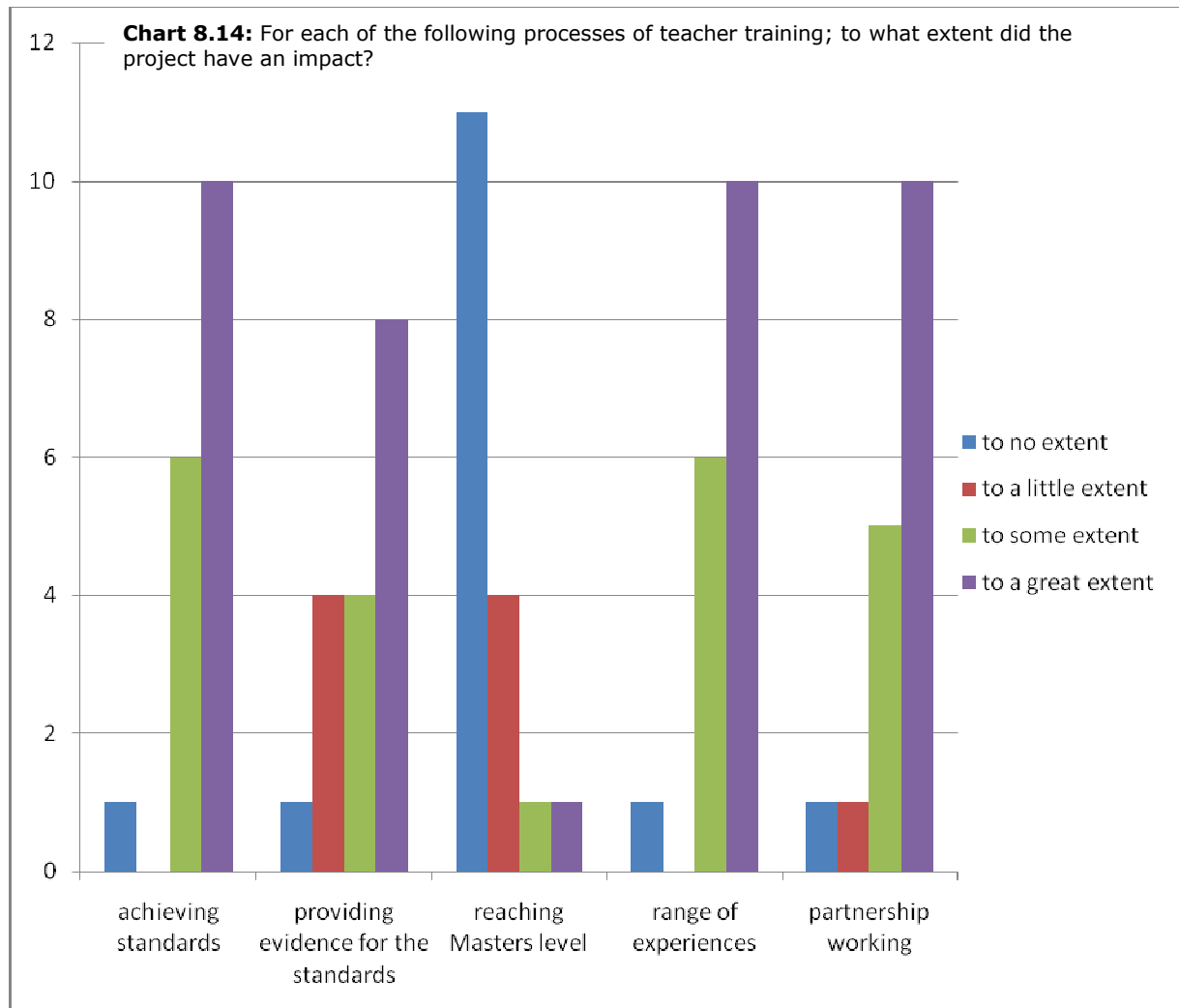


Section C - Q8: How did the project impact on the trainees' processes of their teacher training?



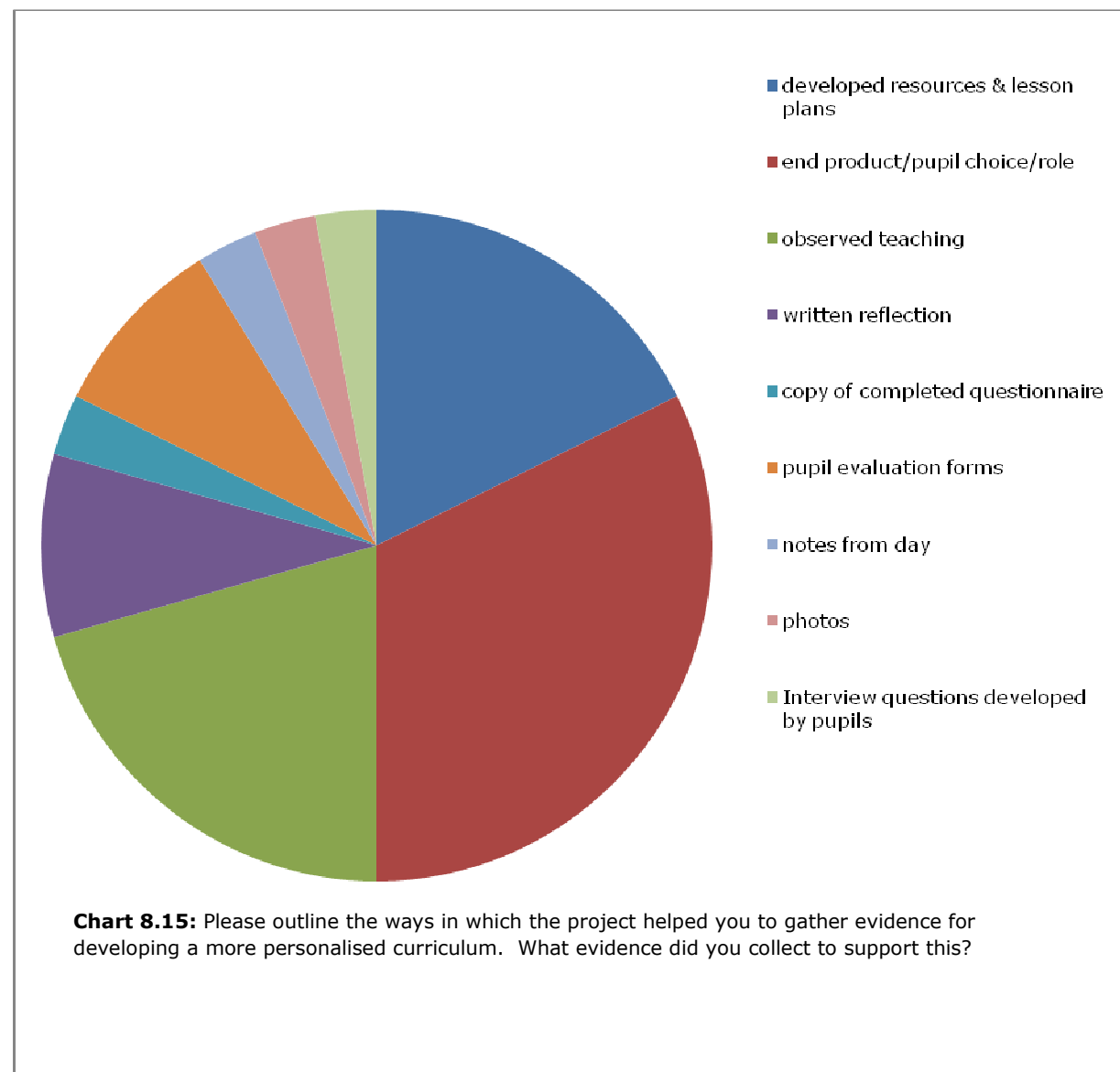
Section C - Q9: For each of the following processes of teacher training; to what extent did the project have an impact?

One of the biggest impacts of the project for trainees was enabling them to reach Masters level work in their ITE programme.



Section C - Q10: Please outline the ways in which the project helped you to gather evidence for developing a more personalised curriculum. Q11: What evidence did you collect to support this?

The project enabled trainees to gather evidence for developing a more personal curriculum. The evidence gathered to support this standard mostly pertained to: for the greatest part; the use of the recorded news report as seen on the BBC News School Report website. This refers to the 'end product', pupil choice and role'); then developed resources and lesson plans, followed by observed teaching.



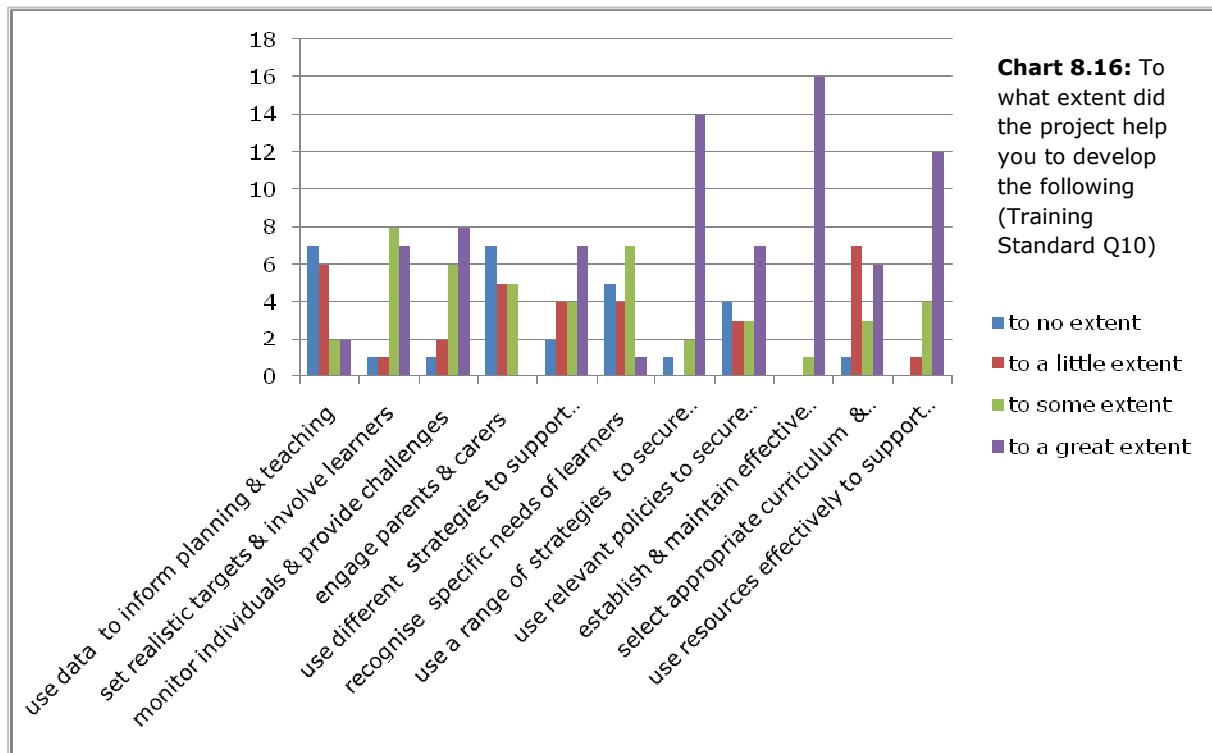
Section C - Q12: To what extent did the project help you to develop the following (Training Standard Q10) “ Have a knowledge and understanding of a range of teaching, learning and behaviour management strategies and provide opportunities for all learners to achieve their potential”?

For the processes of teacher training the project had the greatest impact on ‘establishing a range of strategies including working with colleagues across the wider school workforce to secure appropriate learning behaviours and effective progress’. Secondly; ‘establishing and maintaining effective relationships with learners’ and thirdly; ‘using resources effectively to support learning’.

Most importantly, trainees reported that the opportunity to work with colleagues across the wider workforce was *greatly facilitated*.

Table 8.4: Aspects of training standard Q10 referred to in question 12 and chart 16.

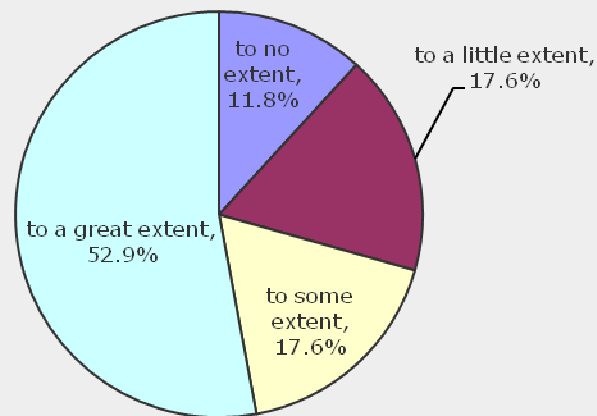
1. use the range of local and national data available to inform planning and teaching
2. set realistic targets for learners, and involve them fully in every aspect of learning
3. monitor individual responses and use discussion and questioning to provide challenges at a variety of levels
4. engage parents and carers in support of children’s learning
5. use different organisational strategies to support individuals and groups effectively
6. recognise and take account of the specific needs of individuals and groups of learners, for example, those with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language
7. employ a range of strategies including working with colleagues across the wider school workforce to secure appropriate learning behaviours and effective progress
8. make use of relevant school policies to secure appropriate learning behaviours
9. establish and maintain effective relationships with learners
10. select appropriate curriculum content and associated activities, and differentiate these effectively
11. use resources effectively to support learning



Section C - Q13: Taking the project as an example of 'innovation', to what extent did the project help you to collect evidence for this standard (Training Standard Q8) "Have a creative and constructively critical approach towards innovation, being prepared to adapt their practice where benefits and improvements are identified"?

88% of trainees reported that the project provided evidence of an example of innovation which could be used to evidence training standard Q8.

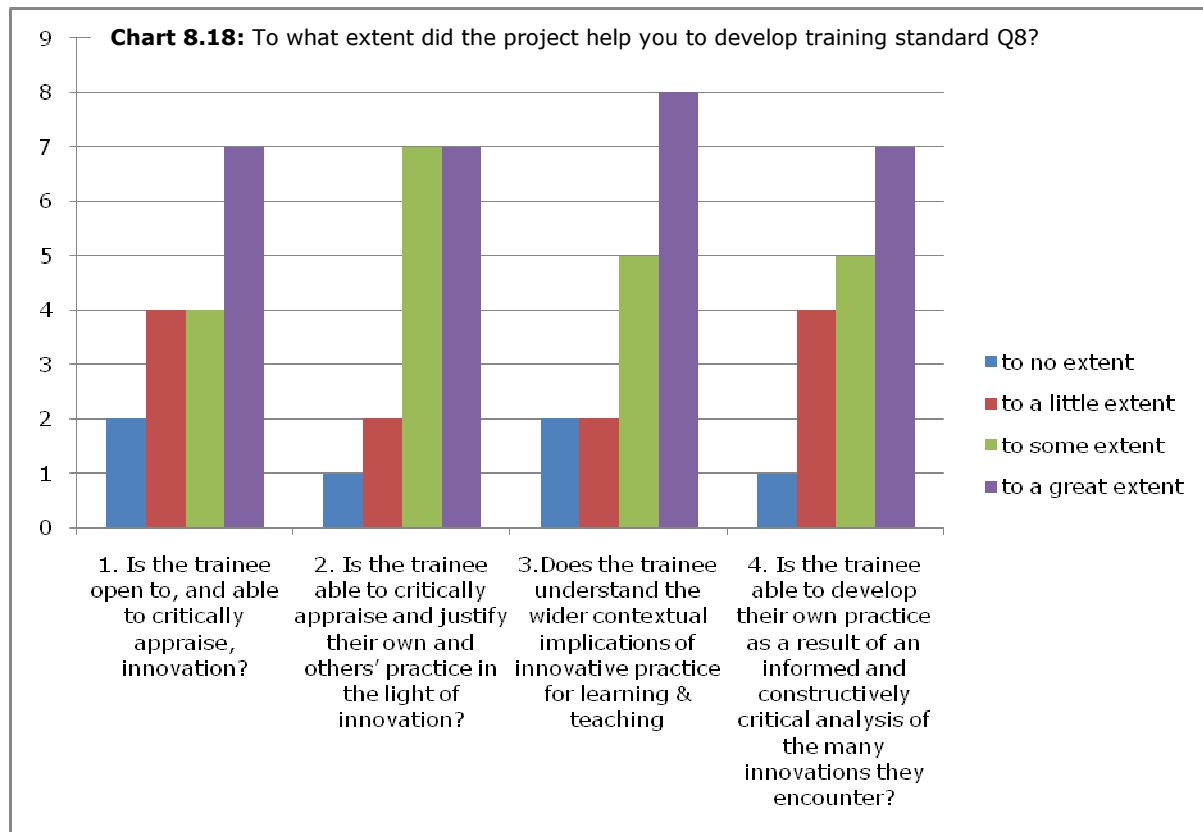
Chart 8.17: Taking the project as an example of 'innovation', to what extent did the project help you to collect evidence for training standard Q8?



Section C - Q14: What evidence did you collect to support this?

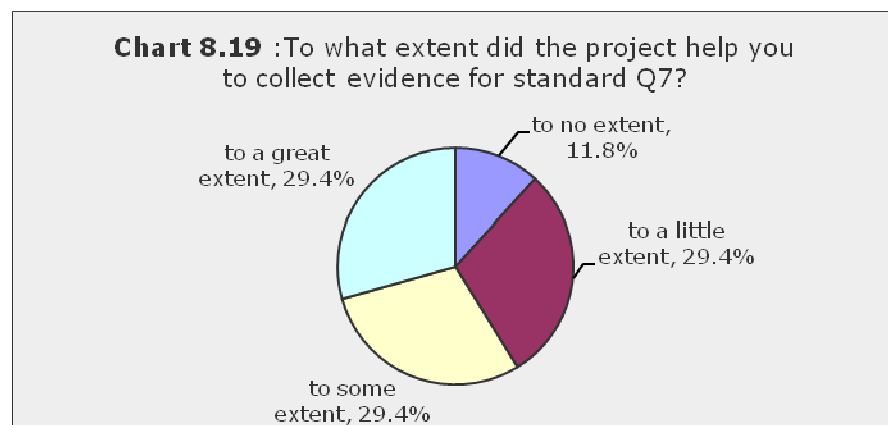
The types of evidence collected were very similar to those collected for Q10: namely; lesson plans, pupils' work, trainees' written reflections, signed off standards and the final product from the live day.

Section C - Q15: To what extent did the project help you to develop the following (Training Standard Q8)?



Section C - Q16: To what extent did the project help you to collect evidence for the standard Q7: "Reflect on and improve their practice, and take responsibility for identifying and meeting their developing professional needs"?

88% of trainees reported that the project provided evidence for improving their practice and taking responsibility for identifying and meeting their developing professional needs (training standard Q7).

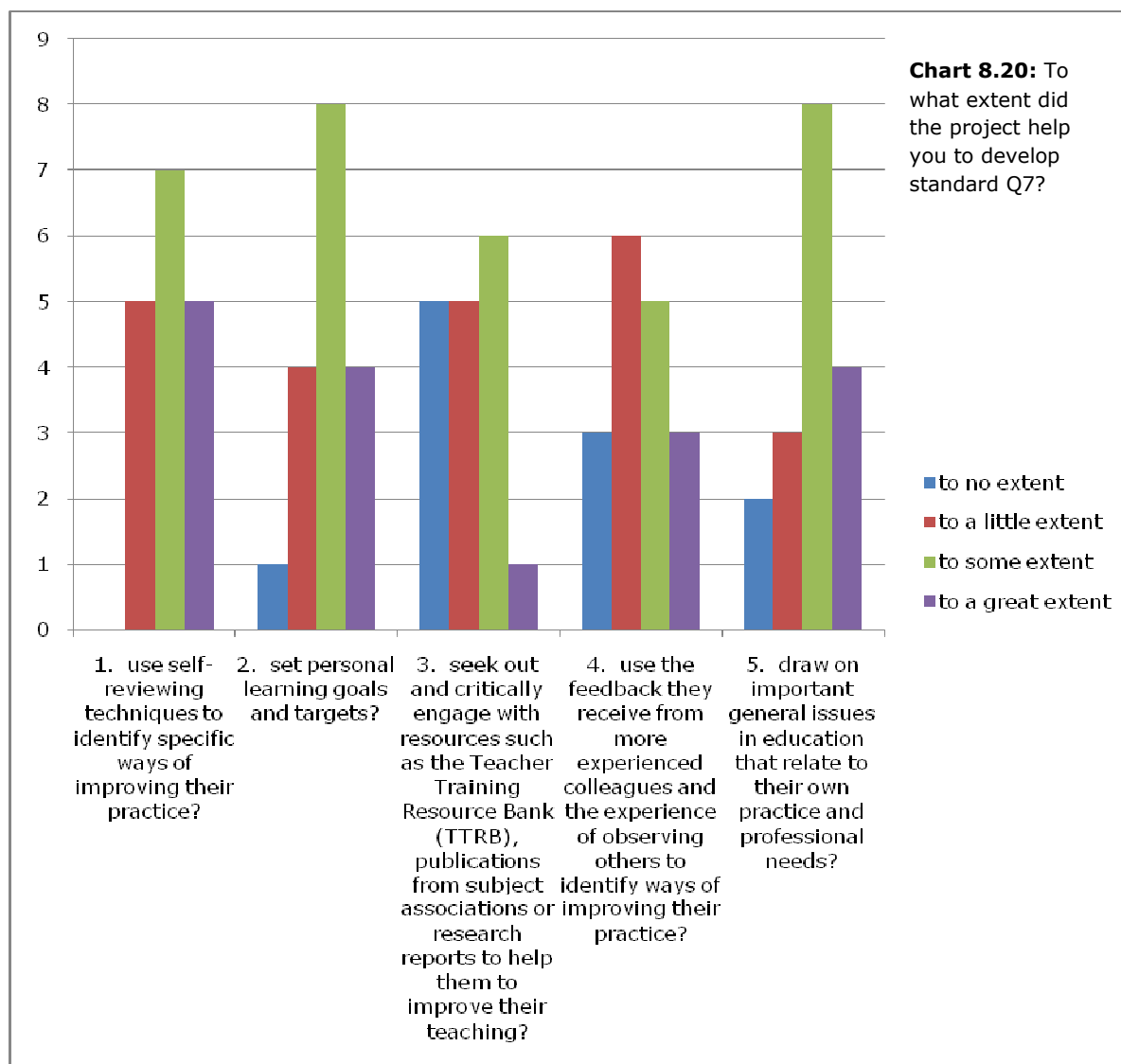


Section C - Q18: To what extent did the project help you to develop the following?

The majority of trainees reported that the project helped them to collect evidence for training standard Q7, with most saying to a great or some extent.

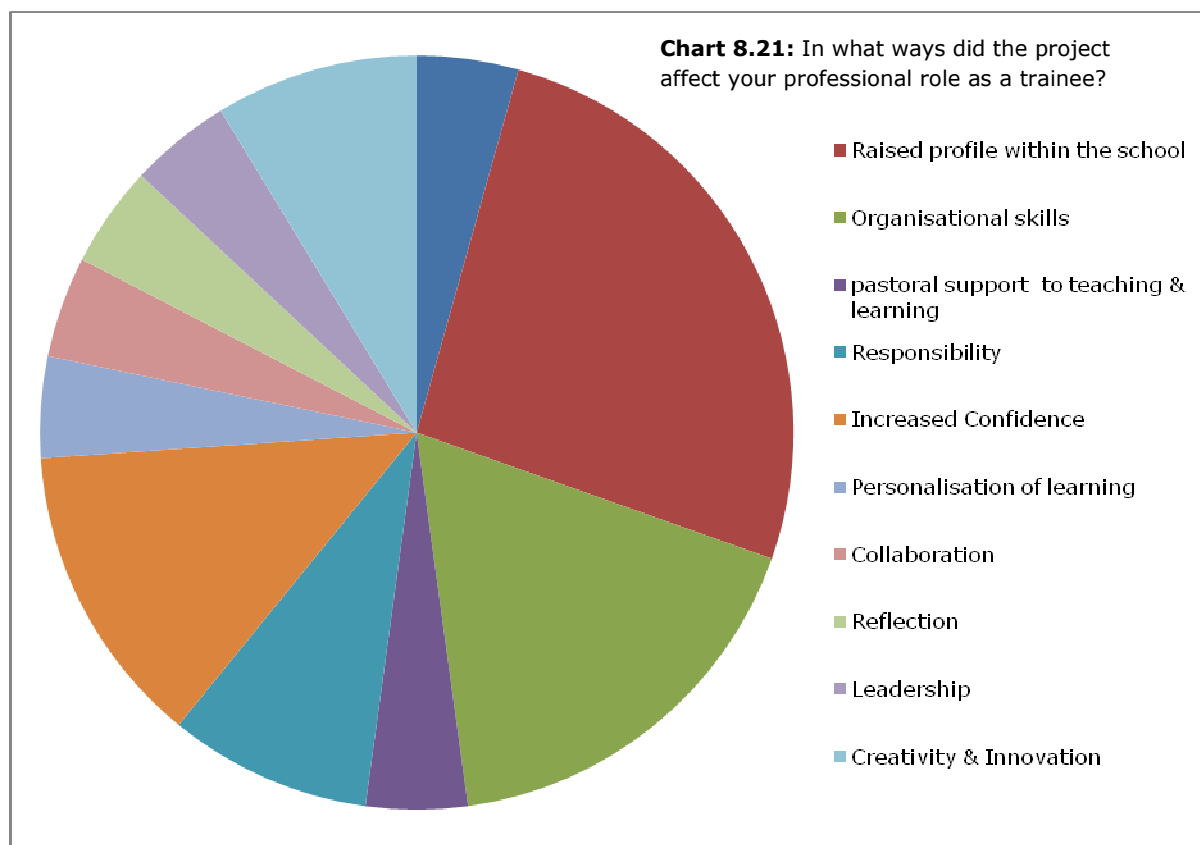
Table 8.5: Aspects of training standard Q7 referred to in question 18 and graph 20 below.

1. use self-reviewing techniques to identify specific ways of improving their practice
2. set personal learning goals and targets
3. seek out and critically engage with resources such as the Teacher Training Resource Bank (TTRB), publications from subject associations or research reports to help them to improve their teaching
4. use the feedback they receive from more experienced colleagues and the experience of observing others to identify ways of improving their practice
5. draw on important general issues in education that relate to their own practice and professional needs



Section C - Q19: In what ways did the project affect your professional role as a trainee?

Trainees reported that the project greatly helped them develop their professional identity. In particular, it helped them to raise their profile in the school; develop their organisational skills and increase their confidence.

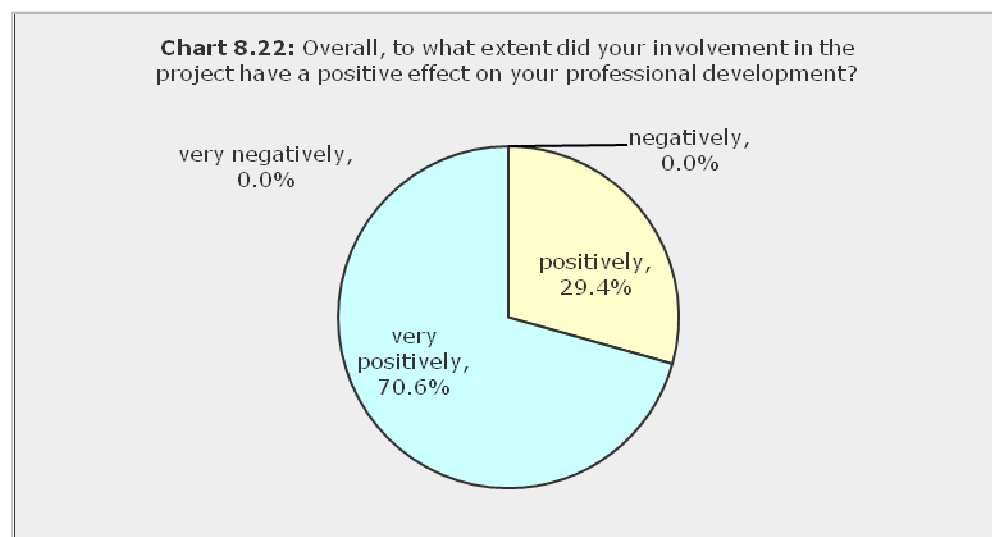


Section C - Q20: What evidence did you collect to support this?

Evidence reported by trainees included reflections, lesson plans and other paperwork associated with the lessons, including emails. There was also evidence from the project itself on the BBC News School Report website and letters of thanks from the head teacher.

Section C - Q21: Overall, to what extent did your involvement in the project have a positive effect on your professional development?

100% of trainees reported that the project had a positive effect on their professional development.

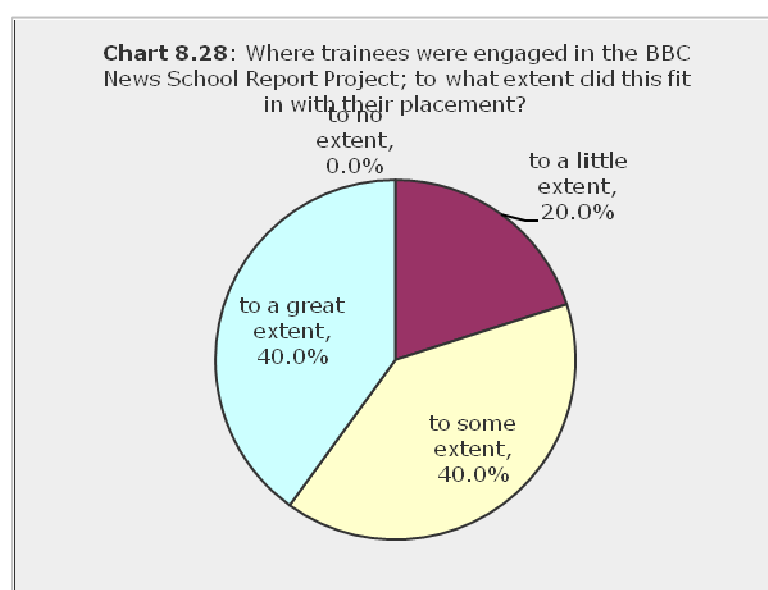


Section D School Mentors:

Section D - Q1: Where trainees were engaged in the BBC News School Report Project; to what extent did this fit in with their placement?

There were 5 school mentors who responded to the online survey.

100% of school mentors reported that the project fitted in with the trainee placements.

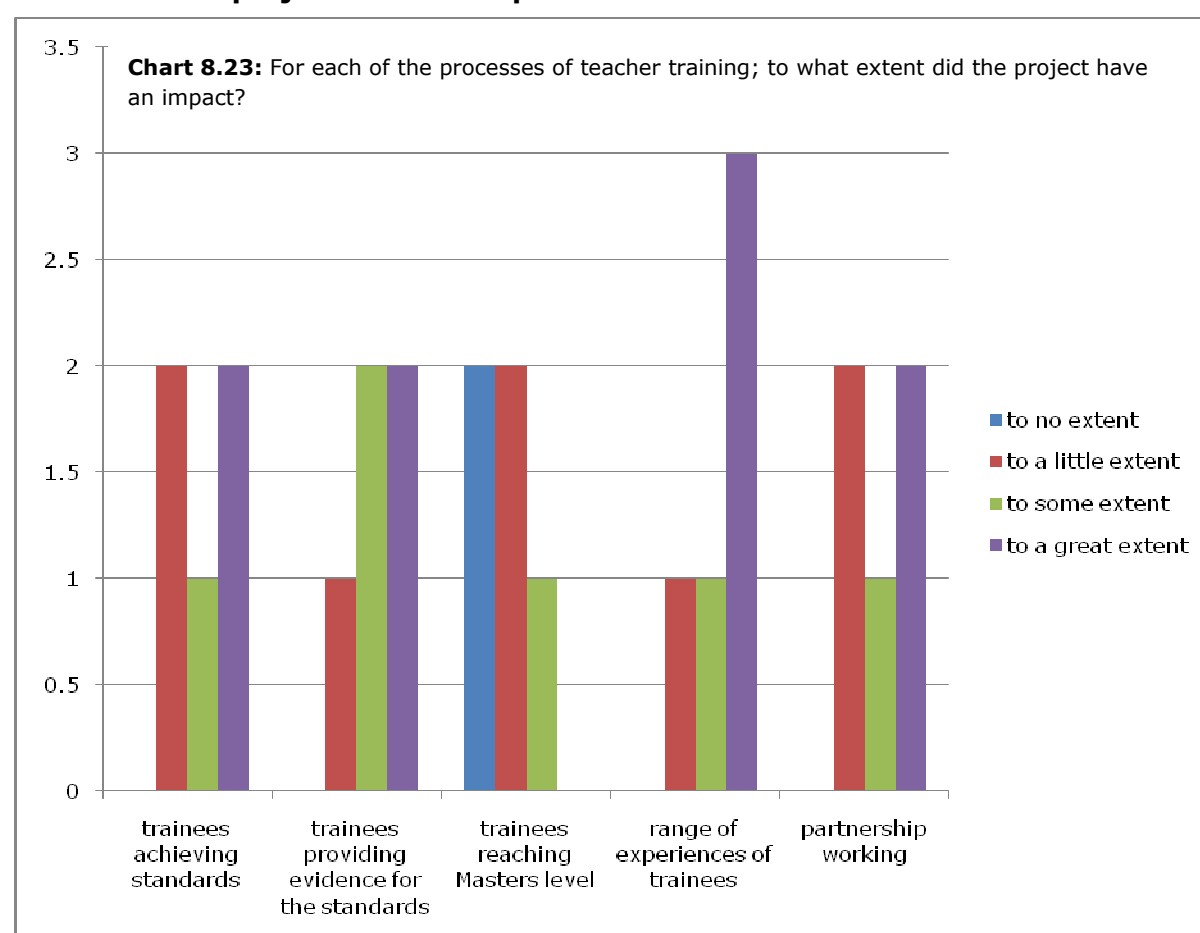


The amount of engagement varied from school to school. As noted previously by other respondents, school mentors also commented on: the timing of the project, being across two school placements, impacted negatively on the level of engagement possible for trainees. One trainee used an after school club in order to become engaged fully with the project.

Section D - Q2: How did the project impact on the process of teacher training in the school?

The use of careful planning and flexibility facilitated the project's incorporation in to the school. For example, one school opened the school for weekend filming and a trainee in another school set up a Creative Writing after school club. This enabled the use of the project to positively impact on the teacher training process. Other schools felt it had a lesser impact, but have the intention of extending the project further next year in order to increase its impact on the process of teacher training.

Section D - Q3: For each of the following processes of teacher training; to what extent did the project have an impact?



Section D - Q4: What, if any were the implications for mentoring in the school as a result of the project?

For one 'gifted and talented' school coordinator, the project gave them the opportunity to become a school mentor in an ITE partnership. It was felt that it was important to remain aware of the collaborative links between stakeholders being fostered. Those schools for which it was the first time undertaking the project, they discovered a wealth of opportunities for mentoring and look forward to developing this further in future years.

Section D - Q5: What effect did the trainees' involvement in the project have on your school?

Mentors reported that trainees' enthusiasm and drive in running an enrichment activity developed the positive profile of the schools, encouraging pupils and offering a range of activities.

Section D - Q6: Would you have become involved in the project if it were not for having involved trainees?

Out of the three school mentor respondents, one said they would not have become involved without trainees, the other two had not heard of the project previously, but now they had, they would do it again.

Summary

The responses to the survey reinforced the comments and discussion recorded during the evaluation days.

In response to the research questions; all respondents viewed the project as a high profile project beneficial to their trainees and institutions. Opportunities for trainees to address some of the teaching standards were deemed valuable and it was reported that many standards were covered by this project.

It was reported that the project could be difficult to organise as it crossed the two school placements; trainees would be in their first school as the project started but in their second when it came to the live day. They were dependent upon being permitted to take a day to return to their first placement if they were to be a part of that, or to take on a supportive role in the second placement, rather than see the project through.

There was a similar variation when it came to the lessons for the project. Some trainees were permitted time in the school day to take pupils out of class, others, supported by the school mentor, organised after school clubs and some weekend work in order to participate.

The enabler most reported was support; from the BBC, the school and / or the provider. The barrier which was reported to have the greatest effect was time, both in school to complete the project and in the timing of the project across the two placements.